

Dichromatic

Preface

To mon compagnon de misère

Think of reality as a snake, ever eating, ever devouring, all that surrounds itself is mere sustenance for its insatiable gluttony. Eyes very much bigger than its stomach, yet no matter how much it may eat, no matter how it may gorge itself on that which surrounds it, it does not grow, nor does it shrink, for it is in enteral consumption of itself, painful consumption, ever hungry, yet, ever full, such is reality.

The entirety of this book can be summarised in a simple phrase: there is more bad than good in the world, and when something is neither bad nor good it abounds in equal and opposite parts, relative to its antonym. This work too could be considered a continuation of Schopenhauer's "studies in pessimism", referring continuously to the negative qualities of reality.

The world, in its entirety, could be perceived in 2 ways, that being the world as hierarchies, and categories and the other being the world, or rather existence as one. The latter presupposition is correct, however the prior is necessary for sentience.

This also will be one of many books dedicated to the negative aspects of reality, and how such elements are endemic to reality itself and immutable. As such the only way to amend the plight of man would be to construct an entirely new reality.

Is such action even possible?

From Kal-El

Prologue - The Curse of Erysichthon

There lived a foolish and arrogant king. His name was Erysichthon. He was as foolish as his daughter was wise. Time and again she'd saved him from his own folly. But one morning, before she understood what was in his mind, he ordered his servants to fetch his subjects from his city. He took them all, his daughter too, down to a grove of trees sacred to the goddess Demeter. Demeter is an ancient Greek goddess associated with agriculture, grain, and fertility. She is one of the twelve major Olympian gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus. Demeter is best known as the goddess of the harvest, responsible for the fertility of the soil and the growth of crops. She is also the mother of Persephone, the goddess of spring, and the wife of Zeus, the king of the gods.

In the center of the grove, there was an ancient oak. 'Chop it down!' commanded Erysichthon. His servants looked at one another anxiously. 'Father, this is madness!' shouted the princess. 'If you cut down this tree, the goddess will punish you for it.'

'Just my point. There are no gods, no goddesses. There's only us. And you are all fools who shake at shadows. I will prove that every prayer is wasted air.'

Yelled king Erysichthon as he grabbed an axe and swung it behind him. Everyone who dared to look then saw the tree trembling from its roots to the tips of its leaves. When the blade struck the bark, dark blood came from the wound he'd made and there was a cry: 'I am the spirit', echoed an ominous voice 'who lives in this tree. Cut it down and you slaughter me. If I die by your hand, I swear revenge will fall on you as heavy as a falling oak.'

The king laughed. He kept on cutting until, with a dreadful moan, the tree crashed to the ground. He held a feast that night. He stuffed his mouth, he stuffed his mouth, he stuffed his mouth until his belly bulged. That night nymphs in the grove wept around the tree stump. Then one of them flew up to Mount Olympus, the home of the immortals. She flew to the palace of Demeter and asked for revenge, and Demeter granted her request.

"For every power, there must be its opposite. If there is a goddess of plenty somewhere there must be a goddess of lack. Of course, the two can never meet."

Demeter said, 'Nymph, take my dragon-drawn chariot. Ride three days and nights through the sky to the north till you see below you a leafless, lifeless place. There you will see her, the spirit of hunger. Tell her to possess this Erysichthon. Tell her King Erysichthon belongs to her now.'

The nymph rode the chariot through the sky till she saw below her a wasteland where even the air moaned. She saw Hunger at once. Hunger was on her hands and knees, scraping at the cracked, arid earth, uncovering a tree root that she ground between her teeth. Hunger's face was a blue-grey skull. Her jaws clack together as if she was a cat staring at a bird out of reach. Her joints seem swollen beside her spindly limbs. Her skin was so thin that veins and guts can be seen quivering within. The nymph knew danger when she saw it. She shouted her instructions from a safe distance away. She shook the reins of the chariot and rose up into the sky. But even so, she felt a cramp in her gut.

That night Hunger flew through the sky. She travelled to the palace of King Erysichthon. She crept through an open window. He was fast asleep in his bed on his back, snoring, his mouth open. She pressed her thin lips to his and blew a torrent of starvation into his open mouth. Then she was gone, like smoke sucked up a chimney, away from the land of plenty back to the realm of lack. The king as he slept dreamt that he sat at a table eating a meal that tasted of nothing.

The next morning he was woken by a nagging pain in his belly. He sat up and found his jaws had a life of their own. They clacked together as if he was a cat staring at a bird out of reach. He called for food. He ate and ate but this hunger was like fire: the more he fed it the stronger it became. He called for more food in bigger bowls heaped higher. But it was no use: it was as if he was throwing crumbs into a chasm. Food enough to feed his family, food enough to feed his palace, food enough to feed his city, food enough to feed his nation he crammed into his open mouth. He only stopped chewing to call for "More food!"

He ate his way through all his wealth. He sold all of his lands, his herds, and his properties until at last, all he had left were the clothes he wore and his daughter and he sold her into slavery for the price of one meal. She did not deserve such a fate. As she was led away she lifted her head to the heavens: 'Great Demeter, don't punish me for what my father did. Help me now!'

Demeter answered her request. When the slave-owner reached the harbour he turned to speak to his new slave. She'd gone. And where she had been an old fisherman was mending his nets. 'Hey, you!' Shouted the slave owner, 'where did that woman go? She wears her hair long and loose. She was here moments ago. Where is she now?' The princess looked at her hands. She didn't recognise them. She'd never seen them before: gnarled, brown, trembling. She put her hand to her

chin: a beard. The goddess had answered her prayer; the goddess had transformed her. She opened her mouth and out came a voice she didn't know: 'Oh, she fled into the city. If you go at once, I'm sure you'll catch her.' Said the princess with her newfound voice.

The slave owner turned. He ran as fast as he could. The princess took one step and she was restored to her true shape. She had an idea. She searched the city till she found her father squatting by the side of the road, cramming leaves and twigs into his mouth. 'Father,' she said, 'I've found a way to save you from yourself.'

That afternoon King Erysichthon led into the market a mare, a horse with a flowing mane. A soldier bought it. He paid a high price. As he led it away, the reins in his hands behind him sagged and went slack. He turned and looked. The horse had vanished into thin air. But beside the road a young woman, her hair long and loose, was picking flowers.

The next day King Erysichthon sold a bright bird to an old woman in another market in the city. The woman took it home. She left it in her bedroom. After a while, she opened the bedroom door to look at it. The bird had gone, vanished into thin air. She ran outside and all she saw was a young woman, her hair long and loose, picking figs.

The next day King Erysichthon sold a sheep to a shepherd. As the shepherd was urging it out of the city he stumbled, and in the moment it took him to close his eyes and open them again the sheep vanished. He turned, looked about him and there, beside the road, a young woman, her hair long and loose, was searching for mushrooms.

Every day she played this trick. Every day she won money to feed her father's hunger. But it was no use. At last the moment she dreaded arrived. Erysichthon was cramming food into his mouth one day. In his eagerness to eat he bit too soon. He bit into his finger and it tasted good. He bit it off, and then the next finger, and then the next, and then the next, and then the thumb. He chewed. He swallowed. He chewed through his knuckles, through his palm, through his wrist. King Erysichthon devoured himself, and finally, the hunger ceased.

When a man has only seen light, he believes light is all that there is, and with such a belief, he states the lack of the antonym, and the belief in the existence of light

fades. So too does the light itself fade, replaced by darkness, and the sight of such darkness is enough to drive one mad. Unsavable is such a man, for it is not himself that is ill but the world. Mad enough to make one both hungry and palatable. Such luminosity is dichromatic, and such luminosity is hierarchy.

Mon compagnon de misère, my friends in agony, is it not that we are the same?

Symbiotic progeny

A Study Of Existence And Hierarchies

There is no meaning in our world,
Neither is there any meaning in us,
The ones who live in it.

Is it then meaningless for us,
Who are equally meaningless,
To conceive the world in our thoughts
Despite knowing there is no meaning to be found?

Ulquiorra Cifer



Wherever there is light there is also darkness, as long as there is the concept of winners there must so too be the concept of losers, it is cause and effect, and one cannot be separated from the other. Yet there are those who seek to separate this cause and effect, to see beyond sight itself, to manifest the transcendental dialectic within themselves. What do such actions lead to? nothing more than death and destruction. It is only human to try and fix what is broken, to try and create a tomorrow better than our yesterday for both one and all, such is in fact the most human act. Sentience begets the world to us as a series of problems in need of amendment. And there lies the cruel trick. The unsolvable task is to create a world of only winners, where one does not sit atop another but rather beside, maybe even hand in hand, as such is our loathing of the unfair.

Here I invoke the words of Nietzsche, particularly the book in which his prose is the most beautiful, the book, thus spake Zarathustra, and his dialogue on the tarantulas.

“Lo, this is the tarantula’s den! Wouldst thou see the tarantula itself? Here hangeth its web: touch this, so that it may tremble.

There cometh the tarantula willingly: Welcome, tarantula! Black on thy back is thy triangle and symbol; and I know also what is in thy soul.

Revenge is in thy soul: wherever thou bitest, there ariseth black scab; with revenge, thy poison maketh the soul giddy!

Thus do I speak unto you in parable, ye who make the soul giddy, ye preachers of EQUALITY! Tarantulas are ye unto me, and secretly revengeful ones!

But I will soon bring your hiding-places to the light: therefore do I laugh in your face my laughter of the height.

Therefore do I tear at your web, that your rage may lure you out of your den of lies, and that your revenge may leap forth from behind your word “justice.”

Because, FOR MAN TO BE REDEEMED FROM REVENGE—that is for me the bridge to the highest hope, and a rainbow after long storms.

Otherwise, however, would the tarantulas have it. “Let it be very justice for the world to become full of the storms of our vengeance”—thus do they talk to one another.

“Vengeance will we use, and insult, against all who are not like us”—thus do the tarantula-hearts pledge themselves.

“And ‘Will to Equality’—that itself shall henceforth be the name of virtue; and against all that hath power will we raise an outcry!”

Ye preachers of equality, the tyrant-frenzy of impotence crieth thus in you for “equality”: your most secret tyrant-longings disguise themselves thus in virtue-words!

.....

Verily, he who here towered aloft his thoughts in stone, knew as well as the wisest ones about the secret of life!

That there is struggle and inequality even in beauty, and war for power and supremacy: that doth he here teach us in the plainest parable.

How divinely do vault and arch here contrast in the struggle: how with light and shade they strive against each other, the divinely striving ones.—

Thus, steadfast and beautiful, let us also be enemies, my friends! Divinely will we strive AGAINST one another!—

Alas! There hath the tarantula bit me myself, mine old enemy! Divinely steadfast and beautiful, it hath bit me on the finger!

“Punishment must there be, and justice”—so thinketh it: “not gratuitously shall he here sing songs in honour of enmity!”

Yea, it hath revenged itself! And alas! now will it make my soul also dizzy with revenge!

That I may NOT turn dizzy, however, bind me fast, my friends, to this pillar! Rather will I be a pillar-saint than a whirl of vengeance!

Verily, no cyclone or whirlwind is Zarathustra: and if he be a dancer, he is not at all a tarantula-dancer!—

Thus spake Zarathustra.” – (Thus spake Zarathustra by Friedrich Nietzsche)

Here, is it not the case, that such a striving for equality, is just the work of said spiders, that in truth, it is not equality that one seeks, but true, unadulterated, and all-dominating power? Let us say such is true, then so too, would there not have to be the dominated, the lesser, the loser? Is it that my previous assertion of man striving towards a world of loserlessness is a falsity, and a lie, not just to others but to myself? No! It is rather that both are true, we seek to dominate, in an equal world, and to be winners, in an egalitarian society. In George Orwell’s novel “Animal farm”, he states: “we are all equal but some are more equal than others”, was this not a prescription endemic to the human condition itself?

Here we find a schism between ourselves and ourselves, the self is at odds, clambering in opposition to itself. The reason for such opposition is that we are made in the image of God, we are not merely the external internalised, within us, within all sentient beings there is a desire to ascend, there is a striving for hierarchy, and for one to sit atop it. Yet superimposed atop this will is the

unwavering and equal existence of the world, as one, as is. Such an external world is internalised, yet it is at odds with our dasein. As such we are not simply conflicted, but the battleground itself.

For this reason, it is that when a victor is decided and the teleology of man made known, that is the point where we can no longer live. When the problem that is all problems is solved, in such a case what more is sentience than an umbrella brought out only in clear skies?

As such, we begin our journey into the hierarchical nature of being.

Chapter 1 - Part 1 -Teleology

Is it that we were all born for a reason? that there is some sacred deed, a metaphysical journey upon which we should embark, or is it that we are left in a metaphysical exile of sorts? It is a product of our endemic myopia, our inherited geocentrism, for if we, in our totality, reside at the center, then how is it that up can be distinguished from down, or left differentiated from right? All movement in such a state would be seen as ascension, and such is why recent history is so often recounted as “movement forward.”

Such recountings however are infested with errors and misunderstandings, but such errors, are endemic to our being. So much so that if such errors were to subside it would lead to us, wholly, denouncing our personhood and sentience in exchange for pure, and absolute nothingness, but here lies the question of the hour, is it that nothing can exist?

Chapter 1 - Part 2 -Existence and the lack of the lack thereof

The question of the existence, or lack thereof, of nothing, might at first sound like some sort of trick, or an unanswerable ruse, but, in reality, it is salient to the predicament in which man currently finds himself. This question is the foundation upon which Parmenides's unfaltering philosophy is built, and is even the bedrock of alchemy.

First, in order to interact with such a question it is best for the reality (or lack thereof) to be felt, before it is known, so I implore the reader here to think of nothing. If you are able to think of nothing, are you able to describe it? For if such a

description can be given, then surely it is not nothing, but something. Maybe it is that darkness is able to be seen, but then, is darkness nothing? When one looks at that which is Vantablack is it that they are witnessing nothing? Quite the contrary in fact, as though they may not see it before their eyes lie that which has absorbed the most light and therefore is much, rather than nothing.

The reason for one's inability to view nothing is due in part to the lack of a reference, when one has never seen nothing, how can nothing be imagined? It would be like asking someone to imagine a new colour, a smell that they have never smelt before, or even a sound upon which they have never laid ears. It is often that if one thinks they have accomplished this task, they have simply combined the sounds, smells, or sights, of various things, which they had seen prior. Because of this there is still reference, but for nothing, no reference exists, and such non-existence is an essential not incidental part of the lot (or lack thereof) of nothingness.

In order for a concept to be formed, something must be thought of, the content of the concept so to say, and a concept of nothingness would be a contentless concept, which by its very nature is an impossibility. To use the ontology of Meinong, is it not that absistence presupposes content, and such content presupposes reference?

Nothingness by its definition is that which does not exist, therefore to try and say that nothingness exists would be the equivalent of uttering the phrase: "something that does not exist, exists". The mere utterance of the phrase is enough to raise eyebrows, and bring one's logical faculties into question, yet is it not that we all believe such falsity to be true?

In Parmenides's poem, he speaks about the conversations in which he has with a goddess, and this goddess teaches Parmenides about nonexistence and the lack thereof. The greek word "Esti" is recounted various times throughout the poem, simply meaning "is". This particular word is significant, and different from the English word in one substantial way, that being "esti" has no subject, there is no "it is" or "that is", there simply is. The importance of such a distinction comes into play when we think about the act of partaking.

It is, or that is, presupposes that something is being partaken in, for example, if someone was to say, "it is raining," here "it" would be partaking in the act of

“raining”, or “it is coming closer,” “it” would be partaking in the action of “coming closer”, however with *esti*, there is no inferred participation, as is, simply is, *esti*.

The goddess then says to Parmenides:

“Here is the other: that is not and that is not must be:
I declare to you this is a path that is utterly impossible to discover
Because you can’t know what isn’t, since that’s impossible;
Nor could you declare or point it out.
For it’s the one and the same for seeing and being.....

But then too from this one, that which mortals understanding nothing mould,
two-headed-for the helplessness in their breast,
Deaf, and blind too, people without judgment,
Who imagine that “this is and is not” is the same and not the same,
and that of all things, the path turns back again.”

The first stanza refers to the idea of one attempting to imagine nothingness, and the second is in reference to the acting out of the existence of nothing. Once one understands the meaning of the Goddesses words, one might take offense, and become defensive to such a remark, claiming: “I understand that which does not exist, does not exist, who would not be able to understand such an obvious tautology?” also often stating that they are truly single-headed and of one concise mind. But by these remarks are you not simply proving the goddess right? For such would be the response only if fallen upon deaf ears, waxed thick with indignation.

I too, however, take up dispute with what the goddess has said here to Parmenides, but only in part. It is not here that we are deaf, or that we are blind, but rather the very opposite. It is that we have sense in excess, or rather being in excess, so much so that we cannot not see, we cannot not hear, we cannot not smell, we cannot not touch, and we cannot not taste. A surfeit of sense now does not simply abound within us, but is us, a priori, as when our eyelids are closed, what is it that we see but ourselves, fully encompassing our vision, blacker than night.

Chapter 1 – Part 3 – Parmenidean Alchemy

The first rule of alchemy which I will invoke here goes as follows: "All things are made from one, and all things will return to one." "In other words, one is all." "By

means of one, we have all, within one, all things exist." "Without the whole, there is no piece". Both on, and below its surface this statement is hard to read and even harder to understand, almost inhuman, yet in its inhumanity it derives its truth.

To paraphrase Parmenides, "all is (Esti)", the reason for this is because if nothing was to be, then non-existence so too would be, and would exist, which non-existence is permitted from doing, therefore all is (Esti). So too is it true that there is no coming to be, as for if something was to become, it must first not be, and if all is is, (all is esti) then it could not not be.

The same even applies to movement, if one was to say "It is here" they too would have to say "it is not there (referring to another location)" and if one was to say "It is tall" they too would have to say "it is not short", and if one was to say "It is green" they too would have to say "it is not red". Any positive attribution, if true, would negate the other, and presuppose the existence of nonexistence, stating that within that which is (Esti), there is that which is not, such a contradiction only could befall those who have sense in excess.

Similar ideas were also presented by the French philosopher Jean-paul Sartre:

In Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy, negation is an essential aspect of human consciousness and plays a central role in his concept of "being-for-itself" (l'être-pour-soi).

the concept of "being-for-itself" (l'être-pour-soi) refers to the essential nature of human consciousness. According to Sartre, human consciousness is fundamentally different from other forms of being because it is self-aware and self-determining. It is not determined by external factors, but rather it is free to define itself and to make its own choices.

In Sartre's view, being-for-itself is characterized by its ability to negate, or to negate the negation. This means that we have the ability to take things that exist and negate their existence, or to take things that "don't exist" and negate their "non-existence". This is what Sartre calls "the power of negation."

In "Being and Nothingness," Sartre argues that being-for-itself is the fundamental nature of human consciousness, and that it is through this concept that we can understand what it means to be a free and conscious being.

In Sartre's view, negation is not simply a mental or cognitive process, but is instead an ontological feature of being-for-itself. It is through negation that we are able to define ourselves as individuals and to distinguish ourselves from the world around us.

Sartre argues that to be a conscious being, to be a being-for-itself, is to be characterized by endlessly bringing nothingness into the world of being.

Sartre here is suggesting that conscious being is the only kind of being which has the power to separate itself by a gap from the solid causal world of objects, by being aware that it is not an object. It is also only because you are a conscious being that you can think of what you lack. Only as a conscious being can you be unsatisfied with yourself and desire not to be what you now are and desire to be what you are not. In all of these capacities on your part, you're awareness of lacks, of possibilities, of unsatisfied desires, in all of these ways you have been conscious of what is not the case, of what is not present, of what is not actual. You have been conscious of negating what is not. Sartre says that you have brought negation, nothingness, into the world.

For these reasons, all is (Esti). It is not unmoving because there is no movement, and is not unchanging because there is no change, all simply is (Esti). The alchemical statement is thus found true; "without the whole, there is no piece", says alchemy. "If it is a whole and if it has parts, so in both cases, one would thus be many rather than one, therefore if one is to be one it will neither be whole nor have parts", says Parmenides.

"What is cannot have come into being. If it did, it came either from what is or what is not. But it did not come from what is; since if it is existent it did not come to be, but already is; nor from what is not, for the nonexistent cannot generate anything." (Gorgias)

This concept, being excessively complex in its nature, left many misunderstanding, or not understanding at all the words of alchemy or the words of Parmenides. Because of this Parmenides's student, Zeno, added clarity, and palpability to the ideas of his teacher, Parmenides.

Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox is the philosophical argument that states that an infinite number of things cannot be performed in a finite amount of time, yet reason shows such a reality to be both true and false, ergo, existence is paradoxical. The paradox is based on the idea that if you are in the middle of a room and want to get to the door, you must first walk halfway to the door, then halfway from the point where you previously stopped. You need to keep repeating this until you reach the door, but logically you should never reach the door because with each motion, you only cover half the distance of the previous steps, and so on, and so on ad Infinitum. Presupposing that each of these infinite movements takes some amount of time, logically one would never be able to reach their desired destination, or be able to move at all, yet one does (or at least appears to do so), and such is the paradox.

For many mathematicians and physicists, this is seen to no longer be a paradox, however, the way in which they attempt to solve this paradox only leaves another, more complex paradox in its wake. The way in which the mathematicians attempt to solve this problem is through the fact that in some cases it is indeed possible to have an infinite amount of divisions create a finite number. Think, for example if you were to divide a square up into infinite parts, each part being half the size of the last, such an act would not change the end area of the shape. Now however there is an even larger problem. Such an action presupposes that infinity has an end, yet infinity, by definition, is endless, and impossible to calculate. Once again does the 2 headedness of man show itself.

Another point, that intellectuals have found less success in debunking is the arrow paradox, the paradox is quite simple but very effective at driving the point of non-movement home. An arrow is flying through the air, and at any one moment, the arrow is standing still, the time it takes an arrow to fly is composed of nothing but moments, therefore the arrow is always standing still. It never moves, and therefore the flying arrow is at rest.

Later schisms about the nature of being were also discovered by thinkers such as Kant, and Hume.

Kant in his metaphysic of nature devised a system in which one could identify any knowable object, whilst also making clear the point that these were not the lone objects of existence. The first of these being the form of sensibility or that of perception, where one was able to work out the fundamental character of space and time, as these modes of interpretation are superimposed upon our interpretation,

or potentially a holistic view of our interpretation. As such we are only able to experience phenomena when they arise in space and time, and any phenomena could be described solely through Spatial-temporal means. Yet, independent of our perception, these ideas of spatiality and temporality cannot be said to exist, being a necessary progenitor for sentient perception, but a wholly unnecessary tool for the existence of being as it is.

“If I take away the thinking subject, the whole material world must vanish, as this world is nothing but the phenomenal appearance in the sensibility of our own subject, and is a species of the subjects’ representations.” (Immanuel Kant)

Think, for example, about Kant's paradox showing that at some level of abstraction, both antithesis and thesis can be correct (we can think of this simply as two opposing ideas). The Thesis being that time and space are infinite, the reasoning behind such a claim is that if they weren't infinite then there would be something that existed before time and space and since time and space are the sole primary forms of being, that which created them would be considered as nothing, and something definitionally, cannot come from nothing, therefore time and space are infinite. Yet, Kant contrasts his own idea to prove the invalidity of the system through his antithesis, stating: time and space are finite, as if time and space were not finite, then that would mean there would be an infinite succession of events between any two given events/points, as if it were infinite then all things would be an infinite distance apart from one another. In order to fix such a problem Kant invokes the concept of a higher power or the transcendental dialectic.

The reasoning for such a dialectic is that we can take it to be the case that all premises in a syllogism (tool of the faculty of reason) are prior conditions by true premises, which themselves must be prior conditions by true premises. (this can be thought of as the infinite why for example one might ask why did the rock fall? Because of X, why did X happen, because of Z, why did Z happen, and so on and so on) These conditions must keep ascending, or regressing ad Infinitum until we arrive at unconditioned premises, yet such knowledge is unattainable by humanity, as such, it was necessary for Kant to invoke God, and as such the purity or reason is proven both corruptible and corrupted.

Hume had a similar critique of the paradoxical nature of reality. To put Hume's ideas simply; we can't form any conception at all of an ordered world without the idea of causality, or casual connection, but cause is something that we cannot

actually observe. We might say that event A causes event B, but when we examine it what we actually find is event A followed by event B, and there isn't a third entity, the causal link, that we perceive. It is not sufficient to say that event A is the cause of event B because B always follows from A, because by that logic it would so too have to be that day causes night, and night causes day because they are followed by one another, however, is this the case? So here we have an indispensable idea of cause that is endemic to the idea of motion and therefore sentience, yet this experience is validated neither by perception, nor logic.

These paradoxes show perfectly the fact that movement (along with other aspects) is simply a notion of sentience rather than a subjectless phenomenon. The logical question from this is why such ideas exist. Why is it that motion is perceived to be an existent phenomenon? The answer to such a question lies in the way in which we actualize ourselves in the world.

Chapter 1 – Part 4 – Movement as a means to an end

The reality of the separation of the objects is a perceptual fallacy, nothing more than an optical illusion, yet, an optical illusion built upon necessity. Sentience begets movement, and movement begets irrationality, as everything that is, is, as I have mentioned prior. Movement in the world necessitates that the world is compartmentalized into two modalities, towards and away, and all that falls outside of such a modality are not perceived, for this reason, man has only 2 heads and not a third. Although the world is not hierarchical, we perceive it as such so that we are able to be sentient and move within the world.

It can be said that all movements made by an act of conscious sentience are made towards that which maximally aids the creature towards its desired aim, in fact, this is an a priori statement about the matter. It cannot be said that one is doing something that does not maximally aid themselves, though these tasks may be seen as menial, their menial nature is still perceived as preferable to all other options one is conscious of. There has been a calculation done in one's mind (no matter the conceptualised logic of said calculation) and from that calculation, a conclusion has arisen, from the list of actualisable movements.

In order to understand the following parts of this chapter, first we must understand what the locutionary acts are, and their relevance when talking about word hierarchies.

Chapter 1 – Part 5 – Locutionary acts

The utterance of words are symbiotic in their progeny of the world in which we live. Words are in a way both constructed in order to help us move within the world, and able to shape how we view the world and act within it, for this reason, words are in a dialectical relationship with reality.

The locutionary acts can be broken down into 3 different parts.

1. Locutionary acts can be discussed in two parts: utterance acts and propositional acts. An utterance act is a language that comprises the verbal employment of units of expression such as words and sentences, whereas propositional acts are clear and expressive with a specific definable point, as opposed to mere utterance acts, which may be meaningless sounds. In more simple terms: it is the explicit form of the sentence, taking the statement (or sound) at its word, in a purely descriptive manner.
2. The illocutionary act is the intention when delivering an utterance, the act accomplished in speaking, and defined within a system of social conventions. For example, in the utterance, “it is raining outside”, the illocution of such a statement could be that the speaker wishes the hearer to use an umbrella when they go out.
3. The perlocutionary act is an action or state of mind brought about by, or as a consequence of said utterance, or the effect of an utterance on the hearer depending on specific circumstances. To use the same example as before, the utterance “it is raining outside”, may have the perlocutionary effect of the hearer using an umbrella when they go out, or even staying in until the rain subsides.

Hierarchies

Hierarchies, are the inherent prescriptive nature of all things. All that is perceived, can and is perceived as a position upon a hierarchy. All hierarchies are also bimodal in nature, with the greater presupposing the existence of the lesser, and the lesser presupposing the existence of the greater. Like a cube, there can be no bottom without top, to go further, within a cube, it is nothing but the bottom that makes the

top, and the top that makes the bottom. (when I speak later of categories, such is a critique attributed to the observer rather than the observed).

Chapter 1 – Part 6– The word hierarchy

There are two distinct categories that can be made when referring to forms, that being the category of man-made objects, and God-made objects. For all man-made objects, the teleology of said object is knowable from a top down prespective. For example a chair is that which is made to be sat in, and a hammer is that, which is, quite literally, made to hammer. In contrast, God-made objects have no explicitly knowable teleology, and any supposed teleology would be both unobvious and reasoned from the bottom upwards. For example, what is it that a tree should do, or that a human should do, or that an animal should do? Though we may very well be able to formulate answers to these questions, the objects in and of themselves were made without consulting earth-based sentience, therefore all answers are rendered as mere speculation.

This formulation is similar to Jean-Paul Sartre's conceptualisation of man as being ateleological or pre-teleological. Sartre conceptualised man as being made before there was a reason for his making, which is in stark distinction to any man-made objects, as an a priori statement about all man-made objects is that they were made for a reason, as a means to an end. Yet when it comes to man, there is no such progenitor. I, however, would expound this idea to all God-made creation (even if taken from an atheistic standpoint, the point of God-made could simply be transplanted for not man-made) for, is it not the case that man is as ontologically destitute as the beast, yet only that man is more aware?

“Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with greater consistency that if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality.”
(Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism)

All man-made objects in this sense are a means to an end, rather than an end in and of themselves. Being able to be described as the means by which one takes to achieve a certain action. Due to the nature in which nouns posit, it can be said that the name given to a noun is more its title as it is the name of the hierarchy in which it ranks highest.

Word hierarchies are identified by the names given to nouns, denoting what hierarchy said noun sits the highest in. For example, It is not just simply that a pencil is able to write, but rather that the ability to write that the pencil has, is, to the best of the speaker's knowledge, the hierarchy in which it has placed the highest. The pencil could, for example, be used as a paperweight, or as a door stopper, however, its position in these two hierarchies would be lower than that of the hierarchy of “pencil,” therefore it does not have such a title.

It might be questioned, “what if an object loses its functionality? we still call the object the same name that we called it when it still retained its functionality, though it no longer operates to any relevant degree within the hierarchy in which its name designates.” This is the reason why I brought up the locutionary acts prior, words are aids in order to help us act within the world, and in this way, instead of helping through hierarchies, it is helping through communication. Here what is occurring is identical locutions, however, different illocutions and perlocutions. Let us say, for example, someone was to ask another to hand them a torch, in this situation the torch does not work, and both parties know this. Though the torch’s highest hierarchical ascension no longer lies in the reality of “that which illuminates,” the hierarchical subcontext is moved down a level from the explicitly expressed locution to the implicitly expressed illocution. In this, a litany of perlocutions could be inferred from this one locution, maybe the speaker intends to hit someone over the head with the torch, maybe they intend to use the batteries to start a fire, the reasonings are nigh on endless, yet the point of perceived hierarchical superiority still stands, however now it manifests its self implicitly on the illocutionary and perlocutionary level. (This sort of reasoning could be used for other purposes than merely the object losing its functionality.)

There is one more point to be made here pertaining to word hierarchies, that being the micro or meta hierarchies in which words inhabit. An example of a meta or micro hierarchy would be the idea of a car. One car might be described as “fast”, and another might be described as “fuel efficient”, though both of these cars' highest hierarchical position is that of “car”, their meta hierarchies vary. The reasoning behind meta hierarchies is the same reason that all word hierarchies exist, they aid us in acting in the world to a refined magnification, so that our will is better actualized, throughout and within the world.

- here I will refer only to conscious hierarchies -

The locutionary acts are how society makes its various hierarchies and how those external hierarchies are mapped onto us internally. If any given perlocution or action done by the listener is the same as the illocution of the one making the utterance, then they will respond positively to such an action. whereas if the perlocution differs from what was desired from the illocution, that would lead to some form of negative response from the one making the illocution. In this way, hierarchies are born.

Let us say for example you are playing catch with someone, and the one who is throwing shouts to you to, "catch," and you are able to catch the ball in your hands. (let us presuppose for this example you have never played catch before and have little to no conception of how the game works) In this case the illocution of the one that has thrown you the ball matches up with your intended perlocution, so there is understanding and positive feedback. Here a hierarchy is suggested to you, with its upper point being catching the ball, and its lower point being not catching the ball (these hierarchical positions can be refined nigh on infinitely). At the same time the illocution of the thrower, matched up with how you perceived the thrower's locution, reinforcing the throwers preexisting hierarchy through positive reinforcement.

The suggestion of the hierarchy on the part of the thrower is merely that, a suggestion, they are at liberty to choose whether or not to consciously strive for ascension in said hierarchy, and map this hierarchy onto themselves implicitly. One may choose how to act within the world, but as long as one is sentient, action and movement are necessary. For this reason, hierarchies are even more essential than the air we breathe, as a state devoid of hierarchies is a state devoid of movement, and such an existence is indistinguishable from catatonia.

Chapter 1 - Part 8- Hierarchical Error

There are two pervasive problems with this hierarchical construction of the world.

1. The first being the subjectivity of the hierarchies. Hierarchies are built on reference points, the more points of reference you have, (the number of times your locution or illocution matches with another's perlocution and produces positive feedback) the more said hierarchy is reinforced. Yet such

reinforcement relies on one positively assessing that the perlocution is that which was desired, and that the positive reinforcement is genuine. If one is able to discern these two factors, then it is necessary to assess the universality of said hierarchy.

Let us say, for example, someone is an amazing drug dealer, at the top of the hierarchy. Yet, that hierarchical ascension might be seen as descent by someone who works in law enforcement. To use another example, one's impressive efficacy when it comes to the butchering of a cow, might not be received well when in discussion with an animal rights activist. The state of hierarchies is hyper-subjective and varies greatly depending on the persons one is engaging with.

2. The second of the problems with hierarchies is the fact that locutionary hierarchies treat others as a tool to an end, and a way in which to move within the world. If one was to ascend up the hierarchy above others, it is these others within the hierarchy that make said ascent possible, they become losers so that the one ascending can become a greater winner, as such, others can be treated as nothing more than objects, aiding or hindering desired movement, if perceived.

This use of people as a means to an end is even more pervasive when we look at the job market and CV's. The CV or resume is the literal embodiment of treating one as an object, assessing the sufficiency or lack thereof of their hierarchical ascent. Truly by this model, we are used as tools, yet our use, as tools is a falsity and a misnomer. Society is that which is using us, but is it that society is sentient and necessitates movement?

Chapter 1 - Part 9- American Psycho

If one wishes to exemplify the commodification and the materialisation of man, there is no better place to look than Bret Easton Ellis'/Mary Harron's American Psycho.

The movie begins with Patrick Bateman eating dinner with two of his banking colleagues at a posh pretentious restaurant. Their conversation revolves around jealousy and materialism, then they're surprised when the bill for the meal is only 570 dollars. They then put all the same American Express Platinum cards on the

tray, as to symbolize how similar they all are. After dinner, they go to the club, but Patrick tells a bartender that he wants to murder her in graphic detail, shouting, "I want to stamp you to death, and play around with your blood." However, upon hearing this she doesn't even flinch, reacting fairly melodramatically as if the words of Bateman were nothing more than dust in the wind.

Next, we see Patrick Bateman's lengthy morning routine; where he begins his monologue not with his name, but instead with the number and address of his apartment. Here it is made evident that status is the only important thing here, not his personality nor his identity, where a title holds far more weight than a name. All minutiae are covered within his morning routine, in fact, in the book, there's an entire paragraph just dedicated to him brushing his teeth. All of these actions aid in exemplifying that Patrick Bateman is more commodity than person. As he peels the facial mask, Patrick's monologue ends with the famous line, "I am simply not there". It is this lack of substance that is a key theme within the film. Patrick's life is completely dominated by image; he is how he is perceived, "Esse Est Percipi". He spends hours working on how he looks, and the rest of the day he spends worrying about if his presentation was sufficient to achieve the desired aims. All of his work, all of his efforts, all of his money, are just to broadcast the picture of a perfect man. His long morning routine contributes to the physical portion of it, but he also works towards his image in conversations with people he deems as his equals, he's the master of virtue signalling, of saying the right things, but ultimately being completely devoid of any ethics or morality.

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth to "bear welcome in your eye, / Your hand, your tongue; look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't", Bateman is such a serpent, and a tarantula also.

He will talk about high-minded ideals, all whilst being the most broken, and morally bankrupt of all his peers. He will talk about respecting women and discrimination, and in the next scene sexually harasses a secretary, and kill a homeless man, for the sheer reason that they "have nothing in common". So while he tries to look like a "good" and "strong" man, in reality, he, and all the people around him are weak and this weakness is endemic to man. In this decadent world, the only thing that matters is "Status Above All Else", and status above all else.

We are all the same, though other things may be valued, the core ideas, of desiring to be better than another are endemic to the human condition. And when one finds

themselves in a situation where the hierarchy which they are in is maladapted to themselves, they get a sense of existential dread and lash out against such a system. Yet, when one sees the erroneous nature of hierarchies in and of themselves, and their all-encompassing nature, it is enough to drive one mad, and even psychotic.

Chapter 1 – Part 10 – Hierarchy-morality Schizm

When we look at man from a 3D, and not 4D perspective (4D meaning taking into account time in its totality), it is often hard to distinguish who one is, from what he is doing in that current moment. Many years back I was in conversation with a friend, he was listening to a prominent rapper, who was just convicted and arrested for killing multiple people in a home invasion. Out of sheer interest, I asked my friend if he was aware of this, and he responded, “what does that have to do with how good his music is?”. as such, this schism is made evident.

One's morality or lack thereof (under any moral system) has nothing to do with one's position on any given hierarchy unless that position is especially morally bound which is a rarity. As such, it often incentivises people to do actions that they themselves believe to be immoral in order to achieve greater hierarchical heights, this can be seen throughout the actions of people with power.

The reason for this situation is because man, treats all as objects, as I have stated prior. Think for example of a pen that has a racial slur written across it, the racial slur, does not actively diminish the pen's ability to write, in the same way, that an artist maliciously saying a racial slur, often, does not actively diminish one's ability to make art, or the art previously made.

Objects do not have morality.

Man is an object.

Man has morality.

Such is a paradox.

Chapter 1 – Part 11 – The types of competition

Hierarchies are competitive in nature, however, the types of competition differ, and can split into two types.

1. The first type is explicit competition, this refers to a competition where both know explicitly that they are competing against one another, and, more importantly, they know that the one they are competing against knows it's a competition. An example of this would be sports. In all sports, there are parameters made which indicate, how one is to win, and how one is to lose. In such a competition the winner is what makes the loser, the existence of the loser is an essential not incidental component for victory in an explicit competition. For example, if you were to play a game of football, and no one was to lose said game, yet a winner was to also be announced, it would be the same as saying that there can be top without bottom or right without left. It is also important to know that in these games winning and losing are necessary constituents of said game, meaning if there was no winner, then there so too, would be no game/explicit hierarchy.

It is also important to note here that the greater the amount of losers, the greater the victory becomes. For example, the reason why Andy Murray is so well renowned when it comes to tennis, is because he has beaten the best people, who have beaten the best people, or, of these people who have strongly integrated the hierarchy which we know as "tennis", he has beaten the largest amount. So too could it be said, that he has made many losers, and because of this, he is ever more the winner.

2. The second type of competition is implicit competition. implicit competition can manifest in 2 ways, one being top-down, and the other being bottom-up. Top-down implicit competitions are often societally enforced by the locutionary acts which I spoke of prior, in this form of implicit competition both know the competition in which they are competing, however, they do not know that the other knows. An example of this might be male height, though it is often not said explicitly that being a certain height is a good thing, I would say that such a reality is known to most.

When it comes to the second form of implicit competition, that being bottom-up, this is often formed from either a nonshared hierarchy or a hierarchy that is valued greatly by one but not by another. An example of this would be someone who cares very much about shoe size and has strongly integrated said hierarchy, whereas most others would not of integrated said hierarchy at all, or to a much lesser extent. Here the different levels of

internalization are often caused by a difference in upbringing, environment, or innate factors.

Both of these hierarchies are hyper-subjective because it is hard to gauge what one sees as the best, and what one sees as the worst, yet it is a hierarchy nonetheless.

Chapter 1 - Part 12 - Reward and punishment

When it comes to forms of hierarchical pursuits, rewards vary in magnitude depending on the number of people unable to fulfill said social criteria. For example, the best-paid jobs are often the jobs that have the least amount of people who are willing and able to do them. Another, more socially enforced example, would be If the society or the certain tribe that you associate with sees strong men as being good, and there is a lack of strong men, then being a strong man will be more impressive, and therefore garner greater reward. (when I speak of rewards here I refer to any type of positive reinforcement)

These rewards are often in the form of praise and recognition, so the value of the reward is often placed more on the one who is giving it, rather than the reward in and of itself, as such rewards are often immaterial.

Punishments act in the same way as rewards but in reverse. If the hierarchical ascent is seen as being somewhat of a simple task by most, and one is unable to do it, there will often be greater ridicule, than if one fails to ascend a relatively difficult hierarchy. An example of the prior would be if someone was unable to ride a bicycle in their mid-teens, and an example of the latter would be if one was unable to do a complex gymnastics manoeuvre. Punishment is often much harder to discern than praise, as people are often significantly more averse to punishing others than praising them. Because of this, ambivalence or apathy can often be misconstrued as shunning.

Neuroticism, or the broad personality trait dimension which represents the degree to which a person experiences the world as distressing, threatening, and unsafe, also plays a large role in one's perception of punishment. It is not uncommon for one who is highly neurotic to see someone's praise as invalid, merely a way to make them feel a lessened sense of distress, rather than an actual reflection of their hierarchical position.

Chapter 1 – Part 13 – Weighted Interactions

One's propensity to internalise a hierarchy is often based on how much one respects the person who is suggesting said hierarchy, and their opinions. Because of this, the hierarchies of different people are often given different weight, this weight is often proportional to one's position in the given society, but more importantly, one's efficacy at ascending through said hierarchy. Let us say, for example, you want to be a wrestler, and there is a world-class wrestler, that is about your age, and has been doing it for a much shorter amount of time, you might internalise hierarchies internalised by that wrestler that are extraneous from wrestling itself. Examples of this might be meal timing, recovery methods, sleep timing, and even general philosophy. It is often the case that the more one aligns with our desired being (mediated by nurture and nature), the more we will be willing to internalise hierarchies that are linked less to the main hierarchy in which one values them.

As such role models are born.

(It should also be known that hierarchies are also internalised through the sheer amount of others that have also internalised said hierarchy)

Chapter 1 – Part 14 – Socio-philosophy

- Much of the following is from Charlotte Nickerson -

This hierarchical model of social interaction has been backed up through various forms of research, which go into more detail on how exactly these hierarchies arise. An example of this would be Charles Cooley's Looking-Glass Self. The term looking-glass self, first introduced by Charles Cooley (1902), refers to the dependence of one's social self or social identity on one's appearance to others.

The ideas and feelings that people have about themselves — their self-concept or self-image — are developed in response to their perception and internalization of how others perceive and evaluate them (Chandler and Munday, 2011).

This is underpinned by the idea that the context of someone's socialization allows them to define themselves.

As has been long posited by sociologists, people may have a self-image that is formed by their interactions with others, or even no essential self at all.

The early 1900s brought the development of the looking-glass self. Cooley argued that the dynamic of self-creation is similar to a looking-glass (a mirror) in that: “As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass and are interested in them because they are ours...so in imagination, we perceive in another’s mind some thought of our appearance, manner, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it” (1902; McIntyre, 1998).

The interplay between sociology and philosophy is an interesting one. The ideas which are being posited currently are in large part similar to the work of Bishop George Berkeley, the immaterialist and idealist, who came up with the famous phrase “Esse Est Percipi”, or “To be is to be perceived”. This view of the world stated that all was mere experience, and if you could not feel the existence of something through sense data, that thing in and of itself did not actually exist. Yet, not to fall into solipsism, he caveated this point by saying that all material things are being ever perceived by God.

The looking-glass self is the humanistic specification of the phrase “Esse Est Percipi”. Linking one’s “existence” to how they are perceived by individuals, rather than the Cartesian idea of, “cogito ergo sum”, or, “I think therefore I am”

According to Cooley (1902), the human mind is social and mental. This means that the mental processes occurring in the human mind are the direct result of social interaction.

Charles Cooley (1902) proposed three steps to how interactions with others form self-identity:

1. People imagine how they appear to other people;
2. People imagine how others are thus judging them based on appearance and how they present themselves;
3. People imagine how others feel about them based on the judgments they make.

Cooley’s empirical evidence derives from his observations of children. Drawing from his observations of his own daughter as she developed her ability to use the

looking-glass self, Cooley noted that children are especially incentivized to learn how to use the looking-glass self well, as it helps them in a competition for care from members of their primary group.

The self grows as it interacts with more and more people. To Cooley, one can only become truly human through social experience (McIntyre, 1998; Cooley, 1902).

On the face, it may appear that the individual is passive — constantly shaped by others' impressions and judgments. However, Cooley does not see the self as a one-way internalization of interactions; instead, people play an active role in shaping how others think about them (Squirrell, 2020).

Cooley focuses in particular on people's participation in forming their self-image in 3 main ways.

1. The first way is through emphasising the active role the individual plays in interpreting the perceived judgments and perceptions of others. Let's say, for example, one's perceptions of others' judgments can be highly inaccurate. For example, on a dance floor, many people who see themselves as "good" dancers may in fact be perceived as "bad" dancers, but will nonetheless react as if they are good dancers. While individuals' self-image are shaped by others, this only happens through the mediation of their own minds. People must depend on their imagination, either thinking about how others may react or observing others' responses and connecting these two inferences about the workings of another's inner mind (Squirrell, 2020). (This is simply a component of the hierarchical error which I spoke of prior)
2. The second way is through emphasising the individual's selective application of the looking-glass self. There are certain circumstances where individuals care more about others' perceptions of them than others. For example, someone traveling through a foreign city where they know no one may be less conscious about how they appear to others than someone in an interview for their dream job (Squirrell, 2020). (This is simply weighted interactions)
3. Lastly, people use the looking-glass self to control and evaluate the responses of others. Because people are aware that others are perceiving, reacting to, and judging them, they attempt to shape the impressions that

they give others. For example, someone may brag about how much alcohol they consumed over the course of a weekend to their friends, but make a concerted effort to hide this information from their employer (Squirrell, 2020). (This is another form of hierarchical error)

Another prominent and influential account of the self in sociology comes from Erving Goffman's "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959).

Although Goffman never explicitly mentions the looking-glass self, Goffman, like Cooley, focused on embarrassment as a social emotion (Scheff, 2005). Here, Goffman uses the imagery of theatre to draw comparison to the nuances of social interaction. The resulting theory of social interaction is called the dramaturgical model of social life. Goffman likens people taking part in social interactions to actors on a stage, taking part in various social roles.

When in "front stage," the actors are able to see an audience and that audience's expectations of the roles they should play influences the actor's behavior. This audience can vary based upon the setting (the location and context where the interaction takes place) (1959). Meanwhile, while "backstage," individuals can release this role or identity. In essence, people acting "front stage" are undergoing a constant process of "impression management."

George Herbert Mead's conception of socialization elaborated on Cooley's foundation. Mead argued that the self involves two phases: the "Me" and the "I." The Me is based on how someone sees others as seeing themselves, while the I is one's personal reaction to a situation. Someone forms their social self through an ongoing interaction between the Me and the I (McIntyre, 1998).

Like Cooley, Mead argues that the I and Me must be developed through socialization during children, particularly through play and games. For example, a child taking on a variety of roles during a play session will begin to appreciate the perspectives of other people as well as build up a sense of themselves as something that other people look at and make judgments about (McIntyre, 1998).

Research has consistently supported Cooley's idea that people act based upon the perceptions they have of how others perceive them, rather than their actual responses.

This emphasis on distinguishing between the actual responses of others and people's perceptions of these responses has also gained much attention.

Felson (1981) found that projection was an important part of actively constructing reflected appraisals. People who believe that they are competent are more likely to believe that others see them as competent. Rosenberg (1979) proposes four other factors as having effects on reflected appraisals: someone's awareness of reflected appraisals, their agreement with them, the personal relevance these appraisals have, and their interpersonal significance. (One might see this as a dialectical relationship between the internaliseability of certain hierarchies based on one's innate temperament/genetic makeup)

For example, people might suppress negative feelings about others to avoid conflict, particularly when one party has significantly more power than the other (Franks and Gecas, 1992).

These self-appraisals can also be limited by communication barriers and styles, and there are certain circumstances — such as when self-evaluation is ambiguous — where the perceived responses of others are more aligned with their actual responses (Franks and Gecas, 1992). To summarize, the relationship and alignment between the perceived and actual responses of others are heavily dependent on context, and people generally select whose responses do and do not matter to them.

According to Cooley, people learn to use the “looking-glass” — and thus learn who the self is — through primary groups such as the family. Primary groups are “characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation (McIntyre, 1998).

The sociological models which I have mentioned prior agree, and add validity to my hierarchical ideas, however, they often do not go deep enough. For example, one's likelihood to internalise hierarchies is often based on genetic factors, particularly the big five-factor model, that being, openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These traits are highly based on one's nature, and often influence who one sees as being their role model. Here I use a role model in a particular term, that being the person whom one aligns greatly with when it comes to the specific hierarchies in which one wants to ascend.

Another point of interest is the anti-rolemodel. The anti-rolemodel often has the same amount of influence over the subject, yet instead, the hierarchical ascension is reversed. This can often happen in a parent-child relationship, where the child now does the opposite of what the parent says, often in order to assert themselves as their own being, not simply a product of another. (It is not obvious whether this idea would be likely to go against that which was put forward by Cooley or Goffman.)

Chapter 1 - Part 15 - Hierarchical Dialectical Materialism

Here I want it to be known, that even though I bring up the ideas of Marx I am not a Marxist, though I do very much like his dialectic, as a derivation, and adaptation of that of Hegels.

Dialectical Materialism is a way of understanding reality; whether thoughts, emotions or the material world. Simply stated, this methodology is the combination of Dialectics and Materialism. The materialist dialectic is the theoretical foundation of Marxism.

Dialectics is the method of reasoning which aims to understand things concretely in all their movement, change, and interconnection, with their opposite and contradictory sides in unity.

Dialectics is opposed to the formal, metaphysical mode of thought of ordinary understanding which begins with a fixed definition of a thing according to its various attributes. For example, formal thought would explain: 'a fish is something with no legs which lives in the water'. Darwin, however, considered fish dialectically: some of the animals living in the water were not fish, and some of the fish had legs, but it was the genesis of all the animals as part of a whole interconnected process which explained the nature of a fish: they came from something and are evolving into something else.

Both the dialectical and metaphysical modes of the world could be thought of as being true, however true for different reasons, it could be that Parmenidian metaphysics is True with a capital T, whereas the dialectical view of movement is true out of necessity.

The materialistic aspect takes into account the fact that one's environment influences one's self, as one's self influences the environment, in a particular way. The base, or the material, is what shapes the self, and the self, or the superstructure, is what maintains the base. (both shape and maintain one another, however, the superstructure maintains to a greater degree than it shapes, and the base shapes to a greater degree than it maintains. The base also has a greater influence over the superstructure, than the superstructure has influence over the base.)

The dialectical materialist interpretation of society could and should be expanded to encompass a hierarchical model, though such a model is somewhat anti-Marxian in its nature.

Here, what influences our decisions on what hierarchies are internalised, is often largely determined by our own material conditions, either directly or through a middleman, this middleman being the responses of others which I have spoken of prior. Yet, what influenced them is often their material conditions, one might think of the relationship between poverty and crime rates.

I am not trying to presuppose which came first in the dialectic, rather, I am merely establishing the existence of such a dialectic to be true, in the way that motion is true because it is a necessary precursor for sentience.

Chapter 1 – Part 16 – Categories VS Hierarchies

All of the hierarchies which I have mentioned prior do not wholly encompass one's involvement in the world, and for that reason, we are going to have to broaden our horizons and look outside of the hierarchy. Non-experientially dictated categories are categories that do not need an external reference and are trinary in nature, however, experientially dictated hierarchies are bimodal in nature, (these are the hierarchies that I have mentioned prior). The non-experientially dictated category has 3 sides, the first being that which is appetitive, the second being that which is aversive, and the third being neutrality, each one of these 3 operates in the realm of feeling.

For example, one does not have to have experience in order to know that which is appetitive, or that which is aversive, it is innate to one's nature and innate to sentience itself. When we speak about that which is neutral it can be described as

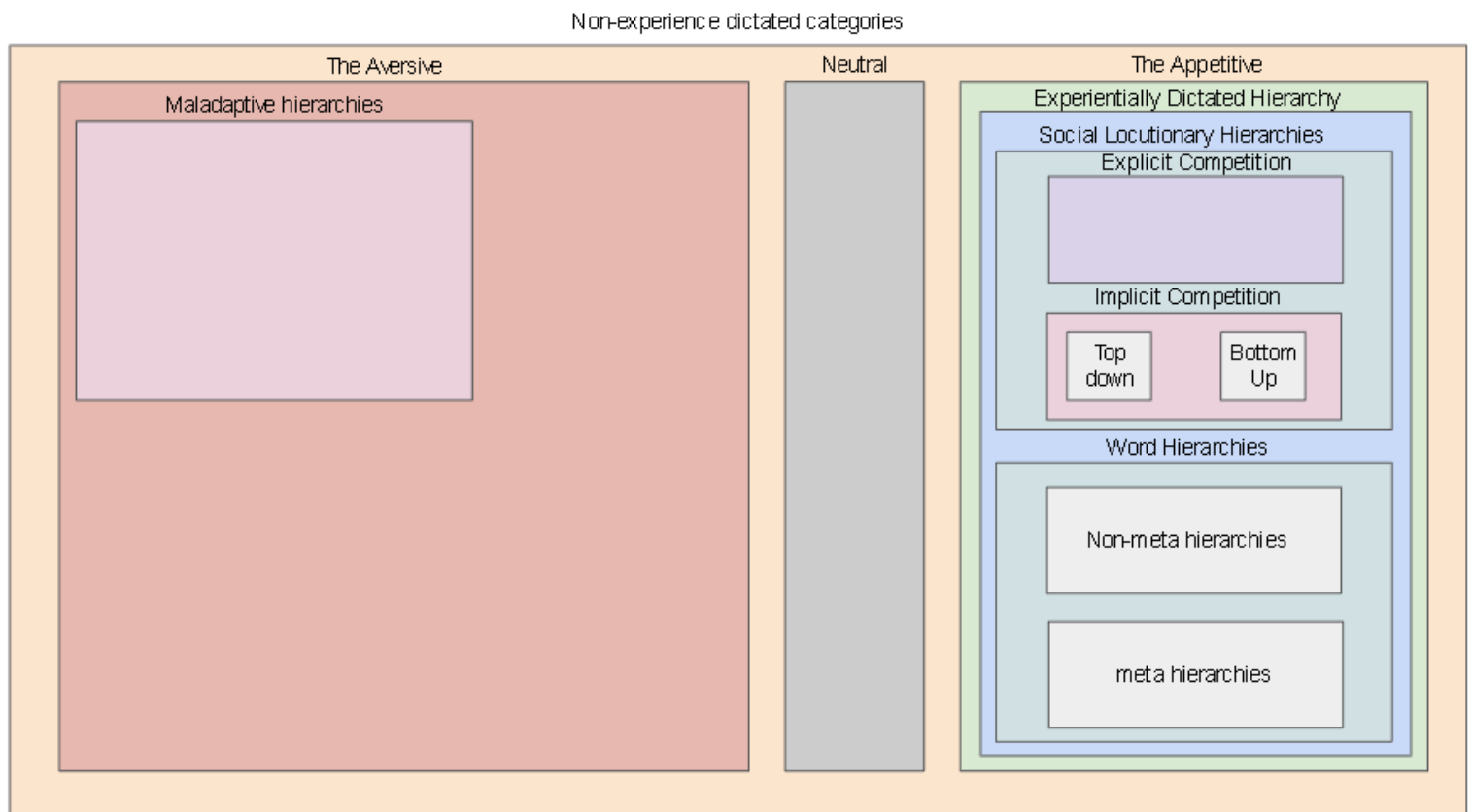
being in a state of neither pleasure nor pain. Since we aim to avoid that which we see as painful, hierarchies rarely dwell in the category of painful experience, and when they do dwell here they can be thought of as being maladaptive. Examples of this would include overwork or overtraining. (Masochism here is not painful, because it is not aversive, but rather appetitive).

Non-experientially dictated categories are not hierarchical, as an a priori fact about hierarchies is that they are bimodal, yet non-experientially dictated categories are trinary. Because of this, the upper does not necessitate the lower, the existence of each is an endemic factor about the self. For example, a cake being/tasting good, assuming that this is the first thing the person has ever eaten, does not necessitate a loser, yet, one can still say that it tastes good or bad. Whereas if one was to be given a box, he would need reference in order to say whether that box is big or small, as the terms “big” and “small”, must always be taken in reference to other objects.

There is still one more important fact to remember here, a point tantamount to the understanding of this book, that being that there is more bad than there is good. Our bodies' innate propensity for pain, far outweighs our body's propensity for pleasure.

From this analysis, of hierarchies and the hierarchical forms, this diagram can be made to encompass my theory of 2 headed movement.

- The Words being inside of the smallest boxes is just to make the chart look more aesthetic
- This diagram assumes that one is ascending up hierarchies



This chapter can then be summarised as the following statements: Movement is necessary for sentience but outside of sentience it does have to exist, in order to have movement there must be various objects within the world, all in the world that is perceived are perceived as objects, all objects can be classed into hierarchies, therefore hierarchies are endemic to sentience.

The Whipping Post

A Study Of The Positive Aspect Of Pain

Yet I curse the day I was born!
May no one celebrate the day of my birth.
I curse the messenger who told my father,
“Good news—you have a son!”
Let him be destroyed like the cities of old
that the LORD overthrew without mercy.
Terrify him all day long with battle shouts,
because he did not kill me at birth.
Oh, that I had died in my mother’s womb,
that her body had been my grave!
Why was I ever born?
My entire life has been filled
with trouble, sorrow, and shame.

Jeremiah 20



It is said that good abounds in the world, that good is endemic to existence, yet, it is also said that the bad so too does abound in this world; pain, grief, apathy. Is it that these two parts exist in harmony, that one is a counterbalance to another? For all pain, is there the same joy, for all failure, is there the same achievement, for all apathy, is there the same fulfillment? Think of life in its most primal form, the act of one animal engaged in the consumption of another, could one say that the joy of one animal outweighs the suffering of another, that satiety is the counterbalance to suffering, or appetite the ally of agony? It is clear here that the pain outweighs

pleasure as an elephant outweighs a feather.

Pain is what dominates in this world, it is agony itself that has made existence its resting place. Consider that which is good; pleasure, relief, or the achievement of a goal, now think of the best pleasure you have achieved, the best love, the best happiness, the best smell, the best sight, the best feeling, think of all good, all that is good, all that was good, all that will be good and know its embrace. Now consider pain. "Give me a cubic centimeter of your flesh and I could give you pain, pain that would swallow you as the ocean swallows a grain of salt, and you would always be ripe for it, from before the time of your birth to the moment of your death." (Jesús Ignacio Aldapuerta's)

Will, revived from the night of the unconscious, finds itself as an individual in an endless and infinite world, among countless individuals, all striving and suffering, woefully and in vain. Yet they all rush back to the old unconscious as if having a troubled dream. But until then, their desires are limitless, their demands are inexhaustible, and every fulfilled desire is pregnant and giving birth anew, the next ever more petulant than the last, such is the reason for man's consciousness. No gratification in this world was enough to quench one's longing, to put an end to his endless desires, to fill the bottomless abyss of his heart. Now let us consider what, in general, all kinds of gratification that humanity may receive. For the most part, it is nothing more than the mere maintenance of our very existence, forced daily with constant toil and diligence in the face of hardship and the ever-looming prospect of death.

Therefore, most people's lives are restless and short. Those who are relatively happy within the ever-so-short stint in which we call life are the unusual and the rare. And if it is not so, their happiness is mere smoke and mirrors, is it not that even corpses can smile? Such is a necessary existence, the possibility had to exist, as so we who are plagued with consciousness could dream with our eyes open, less vivid are these conscious dreams, they leave much wanting. Life, in the small things as in large, manifests itself as an eternal deception, giving merely as a precursor to its taking, like a succubus feeding off the emotion of man, knowing well that the loss, evokes greater sorrow, than the gain evokes joy.

The thaumaturge that is existence, evokes before our eyes the magic of distance. showing us a paradise that disappears like an optical illusion when you allow it to tease. Happiness is therefore always in the future or in the past. Life therefore can be likened to a small dark cloud in the present where the wind blows over the plains

of the sun. There is light in front of and behind everything, only the present always casts shadow.

So the current is always inadequate, the future, ever uncertain, and the past irreversible, as such we sit, deadlocked, insufficient, and desireful. Hourly, daily, weekly, yearly, with small, big, and great misfortunes, life with its deceptive hopes and accidents that destroy all our calculations is something we must abhor. How is it that we convince ourselves through self-delusion that life exists to be appreciated and enjoyed and that humans exist to be happy? Let me assure you that there is nothing for us here. All good things are vanity and the world is all. The world is a bankrupt thing, and life is a business that cannot cover its own expenses, who is the will then? Nothing more than its debtor turned slave.

Who is the taskmaster of man? The vanity of all things now is made known to the intellect, time is the taskmaster and the vanity. It is time that gives only to take, that our joys sit within our grasp only to be stolen soon after, not physically, however, but through the mind. It is not that the joy is taken from one's hand, but rather it is the perception that has reformed, or better yet malformed itself, with the object remaining unchanged. Think of the acclimatizing nature of pleasure, and the chronic nature of pain, in the prior, the joy is fleeting when felt, yet in the latter, the anguish is constant and unrelenting.

Old age and death every life needs, the rushing judgment strangles the will. It comes from the hands of nature itself, declaring that this is an effort to sabotage itself. "what do you want?" it says, "Desire for the better" is our response. Therefore the whole lesson life gives to each man is that the object of his desire is perpetually deceived, frustrated, and disintegrated, and therefore brings more misery than pleasure.

When we feel hungry or thirsty, we feel desire, but once satisfied something that once overwhelmed us is no longer felt. It is worse than this however, as the feeling itself ceases to exist and for the moment it is taken away. Joy and satisfaction are what we miss painfully. Pain and want are the only feelings that can be felt positively, they announce their presence. We cannot be aware of the four greatest blessings of life, health, youth, and freedom as long as we have them. For we do not know them once we currently possess them, but rather it is the gap, the lack of the things that are known most to us, or it is rather that this gap forces itself to be known, and commands attention. In the same way, pleasures are acclimated, yet

pain is chronic. We become conscious of time when we are bored, not when we are engrossed, for this reason, It would be better if we didn't have consciousness because our existence is most happy when we perceive it least. Great and lively joy can only be conceived as the consequence of great misery which has preceded it, for nothing can be added to a state of permanent satisfaction.

Before affirming that life is a blessing worth giving thanks for, one should compare the sum of the possible pleasures which a man can enjoy in his life with the sum of the possible sorrows which may come to him. The balance will be easy to strike. It is pointless to argue if there is more good or bad in the world. The mere existence of evil decides the matter. Good can never be balanced by the evil because it can never be annulled, yet the annulment of good is the rule.

It is impossible for the sufferings and miseries of life to be fully equaled by the pleasures and well-being in it because one's present pain is never abolished by future joys. Life pays for itself since now our state is rather something that had better not be. Everything about us, is always imperfect and illusory, and every enjoyment is only a half pleasure, ever wrath and counterbalanced by the existence of fear, and terror brought about by suffering.

Chapter 2 – Part 2 – Dukkha

The Buddha's first noble truth is most often rendered in English as "life is suffering." As is often the case, this piece of ancient text loses a lot in translation.

The Pali word dukkha, usually translated as "suffering," has a more subtle range of meanings. It's sometimes described metaphorically as a wheel that is off its axle. A more literal translation of the first noble truth might be "life does not satisfy."

The Buddha taught there are three kinds of dukkha. The first kind is physical and mental pain from the inevitable stresses of life like old age, sickness, and death. The second is the distress we feel as a result of impermanence and change, such as the pain of failing to get what we want and of losing what we hold dear. The third kind of dukkha is a kind of existential suffering, the angst of being human, of living a conditioned existence and being subject to rebirth.

At the root of all kinds of dukkha is craving, or attachment. We go through life grasping at or clinging to what we think will gratify us and avoiding what we dislike.

The second noble truth tells us that this very grasping or clinging, or avoidance is the source of dukkha. We are like those who are shipwrecked and now destined to drown, yet as we reach for something floating by to save us, then discover that what we've latched onto provides only momentary relief or temporary satisfaction, as it is drowning all the same. What we desire is never enough and never lasts.

The third noble truth assures us there is another way to find an end to suffering, and that way, as explained in the fourth noble truth, is the practice of the noble eightfold path. As we practice, we develop happiness that is not dependent on external objects or life events but results from a cultivated state of mind that does not come and go as circumstances change. Even physical pain is said to become less stressful with the awareness of a cultivated mind.

So, the teaching of the four noble truths is not that life is destined to be nothing but suffering, but that the means of finding liberation from suffering is always available to us. In this sense, Buddhism is not pessimistic, as many people assume, but optimistic.

My issue with Buddhism lies solely in the last of these two noble truths. It is very much possible for one to find joy within suffering, that one can smile in the rain, and be joyous in times of destitution, but, only if said times are meaningful. Think here, for example of the story of Sisyphus.

Sisyphus was the first king of Ephyra, now known as Corinth. He was a devious tyrant who killed visitors to show off his power. This violation of the sacred hospitality tradition greatly angered the gods. But Sisyphus may still have avoided punishment if it hadn't been for his reckless confidence and prosperous city.

The trouble began when Zeus kidnapped the nymph Aegina, carrying her away in the form of a massive eagle. Aegina's father, the river god Asopus, pursued their trail to Ephyra, where he encountered Sisyphus.

In exchange for the god making a spring inside the city, the king told Asopus which way Zeus had taken the girl. When Zeus found out, he was so furious that he ordered Thanatos, or Death, to chain Sisyphus in the underworld so he couldn't cause any more problems.

But Sisyphus lived up to his crafty reputation. As he was about to be imprisoned, the king asked Thanatos to show him how the chains worked — and quickly bound him instead, before escaping back among the living.

With Thanatos trapped, no one could die, and the world was thrown into chaos. Things only returned to normal when the god of war Ares, upset that battles were no longer fun, freed Thanatos from his chains.

Sisyphus knew his reckoning was at hand. But he had another trick up his sleeve. Before dying, he asked his wife Merope to throw his body in the public square, from where it eventually washed up on the shores of the river Styx.

Now back among the dead, Sisyphus approached Persephone, queen of the Underworld, and complained that his wife had disrespected him by not giving him a proper burial.

Persephone granted him permission to go back to the land of the living and punish Merope, on the condition that he would return when he was done. Of course, Sisyphus refused to keep his promise, now having twice escaped death by tricking the gods.

There wouldn't be a third time, as the messenger Hermes dragged Sisyphus back to Hades. The king had thought he was more clever than the gods, but Zeus would have the last laugh.

Sisyphus's punishment was a straightforward task — rolling a massive boulder up a hill. But just as he approached the top, the rock would roll all the way back down, forcing him to start over and over, and over, for all eternity.

I am aware of the arguments given by such thinkers as Camus, but in this, they misunderstand how one is able to derive meaning from suffering. Suffering done in pursuit of an aim that one finds to be meaningful is often what keeps one going through said suffering, yet if such a pursuit is goalless, then so too is the pursuit meaningless. The act of Sisyphus rolling the stone up the hill is a goalless endeavor, he does it because he cannot do otherwise.

Chapter 2 – Part 3 – Hope as the precursor to pain

At the beginning of time, the Titans, Prometheus, and Epimetheus were responsible for the creation of man. To foster the development of his creation, Prometheus promised to steal the sacred fire from the gods and give it to humanity. The Titan knew that he would not go unpunished for such a crime. Sooner or later his punishment would come.

He also knew that the fate of his brother and humanity was in danger. And he advised him, Epimetheus, my dear brother, my misfortune will not be enough to tackle Zeus's wrath. Regardless of what may happen, don't ever accept any gifts from the gods. With that, our creation will be safe. Epimetheus welcomed the advice with gratitude and assured him that he would not accept any gift from the gods.

Just as Prometheus had predicted, Zeus devised a plan against Epimetheus and humanity. The Supreme God ordered Hephaestus to nurture the first woman. The crafty God created the most graceful of creatures. She was introduced to the gods, who granted her different gifts.

Aphrodite gave her unparalleled beauty. Hermes granted her the power of the word. The cherries adorned her with clothes and jewels. Pandora turned into a magnificent creature. Zeus ordered Hermes to deliver Pandora to Epimetheus as a gift.

But first, he gave her a beautiful box saying, Take this gift from me and give it to Men, but do not open it under any circumstances. Pandora was then introduced to Epimetheus. He was so dazed by the youngster's, unsurmountable beauty that he forgot his brother's advice never to accept any gift from the gods. Epimetheus put Pandora in a room in his palace. She stood there admiring the beautiful box she had brought as a gift from the gods.

Pandora wondered what kind of gift could be inside. Since the box itself was already stunning. She failed to resist her curiosity and decided to look inside. Pandora opened the box carefully. The naive young woman had no idea what was coming.

A powerful pressure pushed Pandora away and a black mist started to come out of the box. The mist contained all the evils that Prometheus had not nurtured in men. Until that moment, Man was pure and lived in the golden age. There were no needs and no conflicts.

It was a world of pure happiness. But the box liberated all sorts of evils that would plague humanity. Envy, cruelty, greed, disease, and hunger were now part of the world of men. Pandora unsuccessfully attempted to close the box. The girl noticed that every evil had come out of the box, but hope was found at the bottom.

Hope gives strength to man not to give up his life when facing evils and obstacles that afflict him. With hope, Zeus managed to extend the punishment imposed on man indefinitely.

The origin of sin or the negative within this story differs largely from most other religious or mythical accounts. The general moral theme behind the story is 2 fold.

1. Sometimes curiosity can be a very bad thing and can lead to irreparable damage, which is obviously very true, as shown through the negativity which came out from the box.
2. The second way this story could be interpreted is, no matter how much pain and suffering there is in the world, there will always be hope to get you through it.

I, in essence, agree with both of these interpretations of the story, however, the weight and meaning that I see behind words such as suffering and hope are very different to the average person. To me, it is that hope is the most terrible and evil thing that came out of the box, why is that? It's for the simple reason that each one of these negative emotions cannot perpetuate itself by itself, if a man has enough negative emotions, fear, suffering, pain, etc., and no hope, eventually man will have exhausted their will to live, to use a Schopenhauerian term, they will lose the will and merely cease. It is suffering that is the task, and hope, the taskmaster.

It is logical to see this example and say that in that case, hope must be the good. However, this would be a myopic and sentimental view of reality, and the role that hope plays within it. Firstly, hope itself is not an emotion, it is a proto emotion or that which is there before an emotion surfaces, for example, if you have hope you must have hope for a certain event or emotion: you hope for happiness, or health, or a car, or a new house, one might even hope for death. You must hope for something that is not there, that you do not yet have, but “might” be there sometime soon.

The main problem here is that hope can be, and often is, completely irrational. As we have gone through life I'm sure we hoped that we would be in a better position than we are in today, we hoped that we would have lovers that we do not have, that we would have friends that we do not have, and to be on our way to getting a job that doesn't leave us over-stressed and makes us a lot of money. Maybe we even hoped for grander dreams, like becoming famous, or being the best in the world at something, however, at some point, we woke up and realised that our hopes were not coming true any time soon.

We are like tantalus, cursed by the gods to have fruits ever so close to our reach but never graspable, and water, ever so close to our lips but never drinkable. The reason for our sadness in life is simply that we weren't able to attain goals that we had for ourselves, as a goal is simply a hope given greater form. Rather, all of these goals and dreams were simply a proxy for happiness, without happiness, hope itself is meaningless.

If we didn't hope for these things in our lives I assure you, there would be no pain, loss, or sadness, as all negative emotions are the reaction to the loss of hope. This idea is fairly abstract as it is rare that we think of the positive nature of life as being a disguised negative, for this reason, I will give some examples to make such an idea more palatable.

Let us say you're a child, and it's Christmas, you overhear your parents talking about buying you a toy that you wanted. (this present is extremely expensive, and even you were surprised to hear them talking about it) Christmas day rolls around and you open up your gift and see that it is not the gift that you wanted. It is a good gift however, one you would have been very happy with, if only you didn't overhear that conversation. How do you believe you would feel in such a situation? Admittedly you might say you would still feel happy, a toy is a toy after all, and it is better than getting nothing. Another reasonable response would be to be upset that it wasn't the toy that you wanted. There are a wide range and spectrum of answers that you could give in response, however in all cases, if the hope for a better present wasn't there your reaction to that present would be a happier one.

All negative emotions can be brought back to their root, hope. Sadness, grief, mourning, suffering, pain, anger, each of these emotions is hope unfulfilled, and what does hope fulfilled lead to, nothing more than eventual apathy. The joy associated with the fulfilment of hope is often a double-edged sword, although it is

true that after the attainment of your goal, you might feel happy, this happiness is often short-lived and when that happiness disappears, meaninglessness is often lurking in its wake.

It is a well-documented phenomenon that after achieving a big goal, such as finishing university, or winning a gold medal at the Olympics, etc, people feel depressed and feel sadness, this phenomenon is called the arrival fallacy, (i will speak at length about this later in the book). When we start making progress towards a goal, our brain begins rewarding us by releasing the feel-good (and motivating) hormone dopamine. The closer we get, the more we're rewarded. Yet when we finally achieve our goal, dopamine levels start to drop, and we're biologically blocked from experiencing the positive emotions we anticipated.

True positive emotion comes from surprise, if we do not expect to receive the positive stimuli, there is no downregulation from achieving the stimuli, or sadness from achieving the goal associated with the surprise.

The true emotion of goodness, so to say, is not hope but despair. Despair is the opposite of hope, its definition is the complete loss or absence of hope or to lose or be without hope. Without hope, all actions are more than what we anticipated them to be by definition.

When you have despair all good that happens to you is a surprise, and therefore brings about joy without leaving any sadness, associated with the terminus of a goal. Along with this all "bad" that happens that you leaves you indifferent to the situation, as you did not expect anything good to happen to you anyway.

As humans we all innately have hope, and we must actively work if we want to have more despair, the best way to do this, in my opinion, is simply becoming an absolute pessimist, believing that the worst will always happen in all situations, whilst preparing the best you can for the worst situation. In this case, no matter what happens you will either be pleasantly surprised or have no emotion towards the event whatsoever.

However, unrealistic pessimism is rarely effective, simply trying to believe that the worst-case scenario for you asking out a girl, for example, is the whole world blowing up, will end in your mind completely rejecting the idea of the world blowing up, because you know such a reaction, although possible, is extremely

unlikely. It is better to keep your despair to a reasonable level, to use the same example as before, she might laugh at you in your face, she might insult you, and bring up your negative characteristics, or maybe even something worse, you are able to go down this rabbit hole as far as you want, the most important thing is that you keep it reasonable.

When thinking of the worst thing that can happen, it is common for people to simply persuade themselves out of doing said action, such a response makes sense, however, if you are going to do an action you must agree on doing the action and not allow yourself to get out of doing it by using logic. Remember all things can be rationalised, and if you give yourself enough time, your mind will come up with a litany of reasons not to do the action.

“If you expect disappointment, then you can never really be disappointed”. This quote encapsulates nicely how I encourage people, along with myself to act, we must not expect any good from this world, we must in a sense become hopeless, because it is only from this hopelessness, from this despair, that we can attain joy, however, is not this joy too momentary and fleeting?

What a sad state that man is in that in order to achieve joy, one must battle constantly with anhedonia and hopelessness. The joy which we get from the surprise in unceasing despair is only momentary, and all moments that go as our despair anticipated will be events that go according to our new apathetic baseline. One, in this case, has made common life worse so that the rare unordinary, and extraordinary stints are seen as more joyous. Like a man, that becomes a slave, so that he once again may rejoice in freedom, here emancipation is the joy and its thief.

It is also true that one cannot completely lose hope, as all action is hope. One could substitute any movement of one's own volition with a claim of hope. When I reach for my bottle I am hoping in excess for so many things that I am not even aware of the vast majority of them, it can in essence, even be said that when I am reaching for my bottle I hope that nothing happens in place of said action, and within that nothing, lies everything, but one.

If it is true that movement is a prerequisite for sentience, and hope a prerequisite for movement, is it not that true pessimism, is the impossible truth of reality and

the unattainable Esti? As such, true pessimism is impossible to achieve, partial pessimism leaves a foul aftertaste, and hope all in all is a vile repast.

As such, Life Is Suffering, but now another question arises, is life getting better or worse?

Candle Wax

The Study Of Sacrifice And Balance

“There is no world without sacrifice.

Are you unaware?”

We are

In a sea of blood, ashes floating in hell

Crying the name of

A fading world.

Tier Harribel



Alchemy's first law, the law of Equivalent Exchange states that Humankind cannot gain anything without first giving something in return. To obtain, something of equal value must be lost. It is often thought now that there can be winners without losers, gain without loss, and advancement without regression. Such a view of the world is pregnant with misunderstanding, it would be the same as saying one can have right without left or top without bottom. All antonyms are bimodal in nature (apart from pleasure and pain).

The bimodality of antonyms refers to the fact that they are, in essence, two sides of the same coin, but also something more. The analogy of 2 sides of the same coin does not indicate a medium between each side, and rather that one falls on one side or the other, however, when we speak of antonyms this is not the case.

Antonyms may sit at two different ends of a spectrum, yet, their position on said spectrum is relative to one's own perspective. To give an example of such an event, one could be holding two cups of water, both of these cups might be hot, however,

one of them being hotter than the other does not make the other one cold, but rather it is simply less hot or cooler by comparison. This bimodal way in which we view the world is only present because of the lot in which we have been given as sentient creatures, to move within the world. Whether that be forward or back, left or right, and even ascent and descent. All things which are living must move, they must change, they must grow and they must decay, all that can move of their own volition, now, can never sit still.

This dynamic self with its constant movement begs the question of whether we are still that which was, and if we are, in what way? Through the constant decaying and formation of cells, it is true that all that constitutes ourselves greatly differs from one year to the next, for that reason it could be said that we are more dissimilar than similar to our previous selves. We often pay little mind to this reality, as the main constituent parts that we see as being us, look, feel, smell, taste, and sound the same, yet, this is nothing more than a test of heuristics. The iconic coinage from Heraclitus goes, “if one was to put their hand in a stream, then remove their hand from the stream, only to return their hand to the same location sometime later, would they be returning their hand to the same stream?”

The look of the stream might very well be the same, the taste, the touch, the sounds, and the smells, might all not differ in any substantive way in which one's naked body might be able to perceive. Yet, is this truly the same stream? The water which was previously in the stream is now no longer there, it has now been cast out far into the ocean. The primary constituent part of the stream are no more the same, yet we would often give no merit nor mind, to such a claim. The stream is the stream because that is what best fits our construction of the world.

And here lies the flaw of man. In order to act in the world we have to hold certain false beliefs as being true, particularly truths pertaining to the self, and the movement of the self. Nowhere does this flaw apply more than in the realm of improvement and progress.

Chapter 3 – Part 1 – Regression

Progress is often thought to be the domain in which humanity truly dominates all other species. The most fragile and inconsequential of creatures now towers above all life on earth. The reason for this is not because of our innate features, such as claws, or tusks, but rather the many developments that we were able to make to our

own being, and consequently the world around us. However, the truest facts about the world still only present themselves before foggy eyes, is it true that advancement can exist without regression? The answer to this is a resounding no.

In order to show the fact that the world is progressing and at the same time regressing, I will implore 3 of the most common examples when referring to human advancement. That being: the medical field, vehicular transportation, and the “advancements” of the internet and general ability to communicate and disseminate information.

1

Chapter 3 - Part 2 - Medical field (Quantitative)

The primary significant stride forward that the medical field achieved was to increase life quantitatively or, to put it simply, to allow people to live longer lives. To number the advantages of such an advancement would be as senseless a task as counting the grains of sand present in the desert, and to list its regressions, would be an equally futile task. Yet, it is a task I am willing to undertake at a specified macro scale.

When it comes to an increase in life expectancy no place exemplifies such an increase better than Japan. A country which currently boasts the highest life expectancy rate in the world. With life expectancy this high, it brings with it a shift in the working population, with Japanese society now having significantly more 70 to 74 year-olds than there are 20 to 24 year-olds or 24 to 29 year-olds. On its own, this might not seem like a substantive problem, yet it is most likely the largest problem currently facing Japan.

The aging Japanese population is post-retirement age, meaning they are not working or putting any money into the economy, which means that there is a larger toll on the younger Japanese citizens to not only provide for their elderly relatives directly, such as providing care, but also providing indirectly through putting more into the economy. Not to mention that In pre-industrial societies, the availability, ability, and willingness of families to provide whatever eldercare might be needed were largely taken for granted. Pre-industrial societies include ones that existed in the historical past of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, as well as contemporary societies in developing countries. In these kinds of societies, people often live their entire lives close to where they were born; families tend to be large;

whether they live in extended family households or in nuclear families, they live near other family members. Very few elders, disabled or nondisabled, live alone in pre-industrial societies, yet Japan is a pre-industrial society no longer.

This, along with various other issues, has led to a cultural shift in Japan with working to the point of exhaustion largely being normalized, and even in some situations work until death, which is so commonplace it has its own coinage, “karoshi”.

Japan has some of the longest working hours in the world. A quarter of Japanese companies have their employees work more than 80 hours of overtime per month. Those extra hours are often unpaid. Today, Japan's corporate culture is driven by the so-called salaryman. The salaryman is defined by his loyalty to his company and is expected to spend his entire career working for the same firm. Not only does he work long hours in the office, but it's also assumed he'll participate in after-work activities too, like drinking with colleagues. The salaryman seems to be very averse to taking time off also, In 2017, one survey found that despite being entitled to 20 days off per year, Japanese workers left ten of those days unused, topping every other country in the survey. Unsurprisingly this excessive and socially mandated work culture led to Japanese people having significantly fewer children, which reinforces the aging problem even more.

There is another problem that is endemic and pervasive in the aging population of Japan, and that is a phenomenon known as “Kodokushi”. Kodokushi or lonely death refers to the Japanese phenomenon of people dying alone and remaining undiscovered for a long period of time. The style of pre-industrial living which was common in Japan where the whole family would live together is no longer as prevalent, due to the vast amount of people moving away from their families to move to urban areas (primarily for work reasons); meaning a lot of the time these people do not have people to look after them, or they simply lack social relationships. The reason for the lack of relationships is often due to the salaryman culture, where your life revolves around your job, and when you no longer have your job, it is not uncommon to lose many social relations as well.

And even this is not the end of the story. The intense salaryman culture has led (in part) to a phenomenon dubbed “Hikikomori”. Hikikomori, also known as acute social withdrawal, is total withdrawal from society and seeking extreme degrees of social isolation and confinement. The hikikomori phenomenon is more prevalent in

young people and is caused by many things, one of those things being the grueling salaryman culture we spoke about prior.

The problems caused by this aging population are vast, yet it is not obvious that one would say that they would simply prefer the elderly to die sooner, and such is my point. There is both loss and victory in all solutions, if there were not these medical advancements, then there would simply be something else that would come about, and cause a different problem. Removing one thing only leaves a vacuum and when it comes to macro-scale issues it is extremely hard to say what will fill that vacuum, such a unique skill is only present in those with a clairvoyant predilection.

2

Chapter 3 - Part 3 - Medical field (Qualitative - Micro)

- Much of the following will be taken from Paul A Offit's book "Overkill" -

The advent of the medical field has allowed us to act upon all negative phenomena as if they are negative in their totality, this negativity often results from how an individual feels, going by the (fairly logical) idea of; it is best not to feel bad. The problem here lies in the reason why one feels bad, or sick, or ill, as oftentimes the feeling of discomfort is warding off a much more pernicious problem, and a perfect example of this is fever.

Why is it that every warm and cold-blooded animal that has walked, flown, swum, or crawled on the face of the earth for the past 600 million years has the capacity to make fever? Is it not possible rather, that fever was just that which was good, and necessary? Is it not possible that fever is an adaptive response to the environment, allowing us to survive, rather than a maladaptive response causing unnecessary suffering? And isn't it then possible that reducing fever with medicines such as aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) might do more harm than good? The answer to such a question is a resounding yes.

The concept of fever as a valuable tool to fight infections is 2,500 years old. Hippocrates of Kos, a Greek physician of the classical period who is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine believed that disease was caused when one of the four humors (black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) was produced in excess. Fever, according to Hippocrates, cooked the raw humor, leading to healing. Though some of the more technical terminologies may have

been incorrect, it is important here that we do not throw out the baby with the bath water, the existence of said humors is nothing more than sentimental wording, the prescriptions behind such claims are what hold relevancy. Hippocrates recognized that fever was an important response to infection, not a malevolent bystander.

What follows is a list of seven studies and one review of forty-two more studies:

In 1975, researchers at the University of Illinois College of Medicine studied forty-five young adults experimentally infected with a common cold virus (rhinovirus). Half the subjects were treated with aspirin, and half weren't. Those treated with aspirin shed the virus from their noses significantly longer than those who weren't treated. (shedding the virus is a way to test if you still have the virus within your system)

In 1989, researchers at Johns Hopkins Hospital studied seventy children under twelve years of age who were suffering from chickenpox (varicella). Children were given acetaminophen (Tylenol) or a placebo. The time to fully heal the chicken pox blisters was significantly longer in the Tylenol group.

In 1990, researchers at the University of Adelaide in South Australia inoculated sixty healthy adult volunteers with rhinovirus. Volunteers were then given aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or a placebo. Those treated with antipyretics had a markedly reduced immune response to the virus as well as worse congestion, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, and cough. Ironically, the study was supported in part by McNeil Consumer Products, the makers of Tylenol.

In 1992, researchers at the University of Helsinki in Finland studied one hundred children with salmonella infection and found that those without fever shed bacteria in their stool for twelve days, whereas those with high fevers shed bacteria for only two days. Again, fever had reduced the duration of the infection and hastened recovery.

In 1994, researchers at the Fujimoto Children's Hospital in Japan studied two hundred children who had fever caused by viral infections of the nose and throat. Half the patients received frequent doses of acetaminophen, and half didn't. Those given acetaminophen were significantly more likely to develop severe pneumonia requiring hospitalization.

In 2000, researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine studied people experimentally infected with influenza virus or shigella (an intestinal bacterial infection). Half the subjects were treated with aspirin or acetaminophen, and half weren't. Subjects who were treated with antipyretics had illnesses that were more severe and lasted three to four days longer.

In 2005, researchers at the University of Miami School of Medicine studied eighty patients admitted to the trauma intensive care unit. Half were treated aggressively with acetaminophen whenever they developed fever, and half weren't. (Inflammation following severe trauma can itself cause fever.) Patients whose initial fevers were treated with antipyretics were more likely to develop infections and more likely to die from those infections than those whose fevers weren't treated.

In 2016, researchers in Hungary summarized the results of forty-two studies that examined the relationship between fever and survival in patients with severe bloodstream infections (sepsis). They found that the death rate was 22 percent in patients with fever, 31 percent in patients with normal body temperature, and 47 percent in patients with temperatures lower than normal. Again, fever increased survival.

Here the research does not properly actuate itself in the medical field and leaves patients worse off than they would have been without intervention. However, the effect of treating fever is even more pervasive than just this.

The price of treating fevers can also be seen at the population level. Researchers in Canada found that people who used antipyretics during an influenza epidemic were more likely to shed the virus for longer periods and, presumably (because they felt better), more likely to leave their homes and spread their illnesses. As a consequence, societies that use antipyretics more frequently suffer a 5 percent increase in the number of influenza cases and deaths. Researchers have estimated that avoiding antipyretics during influenza season would save about seven hundred lives in the United States and about forty thousand lives worldwide every year.

The point here, again, is not to say that the medical field is negative in its nature, but rather to make it known that within such a field of seemingly pure progression, there is regression and backward movement throughout. Yet, there is an issue, maybe even more pervasive than I have not yet spoken of, it is said that fate doesn't

treat nicely those to attempt to play God, is what I will speak of here penance for such an act? Only time will tell.

Medicine, is a tool, and a means to an end, but in some cases, the medicine in and of itself becomes the end, having its use perpetuated long after any such perpetuation would warrant any substantive improvement. Let us say for example you have just had knee surgery, your doctor prescribes a pain medicine. After a few days, your pain is gone. Your doctor tells you that you can stop taking the medicine, and because of this you stop taking said medicine, this would most often be seen as the only logical course of action. Now imagine that you've had an asthma attack, your doctor prescribes an inhaled medication to open up your breathing tubes. After a few doses, you can breathe again. As expected your doctor tells you that you may now stop taking said medication. Now imagine that you've had fever, back pain, and cloudy urine. Your doctor takes a sample of your urine, tells you that you have a kidney infection, and starts you on an antibiotic. After a few days, your fever goes away, your urine becomes clear, and your back pain disappears. Still, your doctor insists that you finish the ten-day course of antibiotics. For the next seven days, you continue taking the antibiotic even though you feel fine, although it doesn't make much sense to you, according to your doctor, you still need it, the simple and obvious question here is "why?"

The dictum that it's important to complete a course of antibiotics is persistent and ingrained. In 2016, during "Antibiotic Awareness Week," the World Health Organization advised patients to "always complete the full prescription, even if you feel better because stopping antibiotics early promotes the growth of drug-resistant bacteria." Similar advice has appeared in national campaigns in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. In the United Kingdom, this advice is included in high school curricula, yet, it is the exact opposite that is true.

The longer the course of antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant. Although the evidence couldn't be clearer, national campaigns to encourage people to "finish the antibiotic course" have been slow to catch up, and when it comes to the lives of patients, such sloth can be fatal.

For most diseases, we stop taking medicines when we feel better. That's because all medicines have side effects; so, when symptoms are gone, the risks of the medicines outweigh their benefits. That is why doctors don't typically prescribe a "course" of pain medicines or a "course" of asthma inhalers. Why are antibiotics

different? After all, the risks aren't insignificant, far from it. Antibiotics can cause severe allergic reactions, including hives, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, and shock. One type of allergic reaction, called Stevens-Johnson syndrome, can be fatal. Prolonged use of antibiotics can allow for the overgrowth of a bacterium in the intestines called *Clostridioides difficile*, or C. diff, which can paralyze the colon (called toxic megacolon), an often fatal complication. Antibiotics increase the risk of yeast infections (e.g., thrush and vaginal infections) and the risk of kidney stones, especially in younger patients. But the single greatest harm from prolonged and indiscriminate use of antibiotics is that it promotes bacterial resistance.

Among the bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics, perhaps none is more feared than methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. It is responsible for 19,000 deaths and 360,000 hospitalizations in the United States every year. In the past, MRSA was found almost exclusively in hospitals, where patients are given powerful antibiotics intravenously for long periods. Now, however, with the use of powerful antibiotics ingested by outpatients, the problem of MRSA has spread to the community. The advent of such a problem can be linked directly to the ease of access to such antibiotics.

Many antibiotic prescriptions are written for symptoms such as cough, runny nose, earache, and congestion—infections that are often caused by viruses for which antibiotics are useless. (Antibiotics treat only bacterial infections.) Recent estimates are that 30–50 percent of all antibiotic prescriptions are unnecessary. The actual number is probably closer to 75 percent. A good thing in excess is often more dangerous than a good thing in scarcity, yet still, both are fatal.

It is these ineffectual drug prescriptions that are largely causing the issue of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, however, still little had been done in order to correct this issue. There have been cases reported by Dr. Mikhail "Mike" Varshavski, speaking of times when patients have given negative reviews to doctors because the patient was not prescribed the medication that they desired. These sorts of negative reviews can be detrimental in the long run, and physicians that are able to identify and place measures in order to attempt to corral the problem no longer have the reputation to continue their practice.

It is argued with the examples I have brought up, that I am cherry-picking data, the idea that 1 bad apple doesn't spoil the bunch, and although that point alone gives my point sufficient merit, I will fortify my case even further, taking, now, into

account the negative macro qualitative ailments of the medical field, starting first with data collection.

3

Chapter 3 – Part 4 – Medical field (Qualitative – Macro)

- Much of the following will be influenced by Dr. Rohin Francis -

There has, as of late, been a rapid influx of different measuring devices, and metrics, which are able to quantify health, and then act in order to prevent one from getting ill. On paper such an invention would be seen as being largely beneficial, after all, the best kind of treatment is prevention, but a salient question arises here, is this preventative screening or a fear-mongering cash grab?

Take the example of Peter H. Diamandis MD, who does a yearly, “full body health upload” stating (fairly pretentiously) that “most of us have no idea what is going on in our bodies”. This health upload includes a full-body MRI, an AI-driven CT, Genome tests, Microbiome tests, and much more, stating at the end, “the key to longevity is proper screening and preventative medicine.”

Though for most this seems fairly excessive, unless you have some sort of preexisting health condition, to a lesser extent we are all tracking different parameters of health, fairly diligently at times. Information about what comes into our body through food labels is fairly easily available to us, we are easily able to check how many steps we have done in a day with our phones, and with electronic watches, we can go even a step further, measuring our heart rate and even oxygen saturation. The gathering of this data does not inherently hold with it any issue, yet how we use this data oftentimes can prove to be problematic.

Let's say you come to the hospital with abdominal pain and I do a scan on you. If I see a blob in your abdomen and you're having abdominal pain, I'll feel confident in saying something is wrong. But if you're having a screening scan, and you have no symptoms and I see some blob in your abdomen, or a cyst on your kidney, or a mass on your uterus, a shadow on your liver, plus more blobs and smudges in other body parts. I have no idea if some of them, none of them, or all of them are significant. Is that blob a benign polyp that's of no consequence? Or is it early cancer?

I tell you I can't be sure and I suggest repeating the scan in four months. Now, you have a potentially serious diagnosis hanging over your head. You have to declare this on insurance forms. You spend three months worrying and after these 3 months, you then pay for another scan. It looks about the same, or maybe slightly bigger, it's hard to know. There is a bit of ambiguity so I tell you again, then in order to be sure a biopsy is done.

Now, you're having an invasive procedure with some risks to remove a sample of tissue from a mass that has caused you no symptoms. Thankfully it comes back benign, yet you have had an extremely stressful last couple of months.

Now the common question arises, "what about the scan where it does pick up early cancer and it's removed and a life is saved?" Well, in spite of multiple studies looking at this, this has never been shown to outweigh the risks, you can pick out some anecdotes of someone whose life was saved by a screening test, but that ignores all of those whose lives were made worse. Screening scans do not improve mortality they just increase health anxiety.

Medical doctors who are in the game of making money rather than helping people can even, at times, turn something asymptomatic into something so potentially detrimental it's enough to warrant ripping your heart out. There is an example of a fit retired athlete who had a screening heart scan that showed some coronary heart disease, and he went on to have open heart surgery (a coronary artery bypass), never once having any chest pain, however not a single study in cardiology shows that operating on asymptomatic heart disease saves a life all it does is expose him to the risks of surgery. There now are even companies charging thousands of dollars for people to have an MRI which can detect a litany of conditions where early diagnosis achieves nothing.

There is an issue here even more endemic to the problem of modern clinical medicine, that problem is the fallacy that "if something is wrong with me then the physician needs to affect my biochemical pathways to fix it". Often times the biochemical pathways are not the progenitors of the feelings of sickness or illness, but maybe the body is responding to something that it feels is wrong with its external environment.

Let's say for example you have a test, and you have not studied for that test, is the negative feeling of anxiety you get unwarranted? should it not occur? It is often the

case that the negative feelings we have are a response to the negative environment which is around us, rather than a bodily error, or miscalculation, and modern medicine can often be a treatment for the symptoms rather than the disease in and of itself.

1

Chapter 3 - Part 5 - Vehicular transport (Climate Change)

The transport sector is one of the biggest environmental challenges that we are currently facing, with transport responsible for 24% of direct carbon dioxide emissions due to the burning of fossil fuels according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). With three-quarters of these emissions being produced by road vehicles. It is often thought that electric cars will be able to fix this problem, however, such an idea seems to be overly optimistic.

The electric car not only still causes emissions across its lifetime, but lifecycle assessment after lifecycle assessment has made one thing clear, the electric car is significantly cleaner than its gas-powered cousin. That being said, the extraction of materials, manufacturing, and charging that is required to put electric vehicles on the road still creates a fair amount of emissions.

A medium-sized electric car in Europe, for example, creates around 76 to 83 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent for every kilometer driven across its lifetime. For comparison, a similar-sized car with a conventional engine emits the equivalent of 250 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer. Right now, lifecycle emissions of electric cars in Europe are 66% to 69% lower than gas-powered cars, with that range dropping a little lower, to 60% to 68% in the United States and 37% to 45% in China. And those numbers will continue to drop as electricity grids decarbonize.

Professor of Technology at the University of Cambridge Michael Kelly conservatively estimates that if all of the UK switched over to electric vehicles, they would need just under twice the annual production of cobalt, three-quarters of the world's production of lithium carbonate, and more than half of the world's annual production of copper. And that's just for the UK. There are an estimated 1.4 billion cars on the road right now. So the resource demand for switching to electric motors will put immense pressure on countries that already provide the majority of the precious metals and materials for electric cars.

A solution that involves public transport and buses has been posited, however, this chapter of the book is purely descriptive, describing the world as how it is, not how it should be. The reality of the situation is that transportation is dominated by cars, rather than public transport. If such transportation was to be implemented would not another problem arise from it? Such is my point, with every form of progression, so too is their regression as its counterbalance.

2

Chapter 3 – Part 6 – Vehicular Transportation (Walkability)

Walkability is a topic that is rarely if ever spoken about explicitly, people are often told to “get your steps up” or to, “get moving”. However, most of the time this movement is done it is what I like to call extra-essential movement, where the movement itself is the end, rather than you actually moving in order to go somewhere or to do something. The most interesting example of this are machines such as stair climbers, stationary bikes, and most of all treadmills, each one of these devices treat movement as an end in and of itself. A bastardized attempt at returning back to the lives we once lived, yet the reason for this problem is largely caused by walkability or the lack thereof.

Walkability has an extreme effect on everything from community to health, to finances, look for example in America, particularly when we look at Portland, compared to the rest of America. Different governmental programs such as slimming down roads have reduced the amount the average Portlander drives, giving them excess income to be spent on other things, such as the home or recreational activities.

Studies show that one out of three Americans is obese and one-third of the population is overweight. 25% of young men and 40% of young women are too heavy to enlist in the military forces. According to the Center for Disease Control, one-third of all children born after 2000 will get diabetes. We have the first generation of children in America who are predicted to live shorter lives than their parents. This American health crisis that I've just spoken about is (at least in part) an urban design crisis and the design of cities lies at the core. We've talked for a long time about diet, and we know that diet impacts weight, and weight, of course, impacts health. But we've only started talking about inactivity and how inactivity is born of our landscape. Inactivity comes from the fact that we live in a place where there is no longer any such thing as a useful walk.

A British study called gluttony versus sloth tracked weight against diet and tracked weight against inactivity. They found a much stronger correlation between the latter two. Dr. James Levine, in his work for the Mayo Clinic, put his test subjects in electronic underwear, held their diet steady, and then started pumping the calories in. Some people gain weight, and some people didn't gain weight. Expecting some metabolic or DNA factor at work, they were shocked to learn that the only difference between the subjects that they could figure out was the amount they were moving, and that, in fact, those who gained weight were sitting, on average, 2 hours more per day than those who didn't. So we have these studies that tie weight to inactivity. But even more, we now have studies that tie weight to where you live.

In San Diego, they used a walk score, that rates every address in America and soon the world, in terms of how walkable it is. They used WalkScore to designate more walkable neighborhoods and less walkable neighborhoods. They found that If you lived in a more walkable neighborhood, you had a 35 percent likelihood to be overweight. Whereas, If you lived in a less walkable neighborhood, you had a 60 percent likelihood to be overweight. Not to mention that 14 Americans die each day from asthma and it's almost all coming from car exhaust. American pollution does not come from factories as much anymore, It comes from tailpipes and the amount that people are driving in said city

1

Chapter 3 - Part 7 - Media + Communication (mainstream)

With the advent of communication and media, comes the dissemination of negative media, which can often be harmful to the individual for various reasons. Two of these are 1), the individual often isn't directly affected by the issue yet the negative feelings are felt all the same, and 2), the media's tendency to focus almost myopically on more negative news, as that is what gets the most clicks.

The most accurate portrayal of the truly pernicious nature of media is presented throughout the movie night crawler. Lou Bloom, the protagonist of the film nightcrawler has no career, no prospects, and no respect from anyone. Spending every night out stealing materials to sell for a couple of dollars, but by chance he comes across a car crash on the freeway and witnesses a pair of videographers snapping up the footage for the morning news. And with that, he's found his calling. After getting a video camera and a police scanner, he begins working as a

nightcrawler, a photojournalist that cruises the city after dark, listening to radio chatter for the chance to record footage of crimes that can be sold to news outlets. Sure, the first few attempts are failures, but as he testifies throughout the film, he's a very quick learner, and before long, he secures his position as an exclusive stringer for the lowest-rated news channel in Los Angeles. Being rated so low, and with the prospect of being fired at any moment dangling over their heads, the workers prey on the fears of Americans by cultivating stories that Renee Rosso's Nina, (Lou's key contact in the station), describes as showing crimes against people preferably well off or white, injured at the hands of the poor, preferably a minority.

After picking up the ropes and doing a few rounds, Lou eventually hires Rick as his assistant, a similar down-and-out guy, but with a much more personable demeanor, to help him get to locations and later film alongside him. The two then quickly rise up the ranks with Lou's sociopathic tendencies flaring in all of his human interactions, culminating in him manipulating Nina into a date where he blackmails her into an off-screen sexual relationship

Around this time, Lou also ups the ante by meddling in the scenes he shoots, from moving injured bodies into a more favorable position for the shot, to eventually arriving on the crime scene of a brutal home invasion and triple homicide. One key moment to highlight here is after Lou walks into the active crime scene he records footage of people that had just been assaulted instead of trying to help them. Returning to a stressed-out Rick, Lou points to all the potential business and job prospects that may have flown Rick's way if only he'd gotten involved. Completely disregarding human life and prioritizing business growth. This gruesome footage pulls the station into the eyes of the police, who track down Lou and demand the footage.

Here, Lou masterminds his setup by calling the police to catch the criminals in a restaurant, and filming the whole interaction as it pans out. Rick rightfully panics, blackmails Lou, and demands more pay, exclaiming that he won't do what he's been told because it's wrong. But inevitably, he ends up with a camera in his hand. Soon the plan takes shape with a showdown leading to the deaths and injuries of police officers and bystanders, two smashed police cruisers, and a massive car crash. Later, Lou pulls Rick in to get the final shot, and ironically, Rick is the one to be shot, first by a gun from one of the assailants and second by Lou's camera.

Lou then delivers the footage to Nina in an extremely bizarre, almost sexual scene where they whisper in each other's faces, lording over the career-affirming value of this footage, regardless of it being absolutely soaked in moral wrongdoing. Despite this footage causing Lou's arrest and interrogation, the film ends with him giving a motivational speech to his new interns.

Thus, we're left with something bleak. Scaremongering Media has prevailed, and a sociopath who has repeatedly shown a complete devaluation of human life is now the owner of a thriving business. Lou has undisputedly won.

Though this is not a real story it exemplifies how media organizations run today, if someone was to get footage of an immoral action, they would often denounce the action but use the footage, all the same. Think, for example of the idea of leaking information, often this information is not gotten in legal, or moral ways, however, the media shows it all the same.

Being constantly shown the worst realities that humankind has to offer can often leave us as jaded human beings with an unwarrantedly pessimistic outlook on life.

Chapter 3 – Part 8 – Science And Nihilism – Ideas From Academy Of Ideas –

In 1887, Frederick Nietzsche wrote what was to become one of his most famous passages: "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'why' finds no answer." Nietzsche's views on nihilism are some of the most discussed by both those who study Nietzsche and those who study nihilism.

While the philosophical seeds of nihilism seem to stretch back thousands of years, the term nihilism only began to see widespread use in the West in the mid-19th century. A novel published in 1862 by the Russian author Ivan Turgenev, titled *Fathers and Sons*, is often pointed to as the work that spurred a growth in the popularity of the term. In the novel, one of the main characters is asked what it means to be a nihilist and he says, "A nihilist is a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle may be enshrined in." The sense in which the term is used in *Fathers and Sons* would be considered a form of political nihilism – the rejection of the political norms and institutions of one's day.

Since the time this novel was published, many writers and philosophers have espoused nihilistic views in a number of different areas, and hence there has also been a growth in the term's ambiguity. It will be helpful to clear up its meaning. We can, in fact, distinguish between four main types of nihilism, all of which share a similar characteristic: that being a general attitude of denial or negation of meaning. Nietzsche alludes to this in the outline for his book, *The Will to Power*, where he writes, "Nihilism – the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability." The four types of nihilism are nicely summed up by Donald Crosby in his thought-provoking work on nihilism, *The Specter of the Absurd*. He writes:

"Moral nihilism denies the sense of moral obligation, the objectivity of moral principles, or the moral viewpoint. Epistemological nihilism denies that there can be anything like truths or meanings not strictly confined within or wholly relative to a single individual, group or conceptual scheme. Cosmic nihilism disavows intelligibility or value in nature, seeing it as indifferent or hostile to fundamental human concerns. Existential nihilism negates the meaning of life."

There has been much speculation as to the source of the seemingly universal need for meaning among humans, but as with many questions of philosophy, there is no clear consensus. The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who greatly influenced Nietzsche, suggested that it is the inevitability of suffering combined with the awareness of the inescapability of death that creates in human beings the desire for there to be a meaning to life. But that issue aside, a further question which needs to be dealt with is where have human beings typically found this desired meaning?

Strange as it may initially sound, the meaning of life has, for a huge number of people, traditionally been thought to be located in another reality – this alternate reality which is commonly called the true world has often been seen as the source of truth and value, and believed to be a destination with the purpose of life being to attain entry or access to this alternate world, either upon one's death or in some cases during life.

Two-world theories have dominated thought for thousands of years, and in doing so have provided meaning for countless individuals. Common two-world theories are Plato's world of forms, Descartes' spirit world, Kant's noumena, and the heaven of Christianity. The Christian heaven in particular has been the most prominent two-world theory in the West for nearly two thousand years. Christian teachings

gave individuals the conviction that their lives, no matter how difficult, were for something – that there was a purpose to their earthly existence, and this purpose was to live according to the will of God so as to attain entry into the kingdom of heaven upon one's death. This story is a powerful antidote against nihilism, as it provides individuals with a much-desired purpose and meaning to life, ensuring the believer that no matter how much suffering they may endure in this life, they will be guaranteed entry into a blissful reality upon their death.

It is important to understand that the roots of nihilism stretched back well beyond the beginning of the modern period. Nietzsche, in fact, suggested that a feeling of pessimism was the beginning of nihilism and pessimism towards the meaning of life can clearly be seen in the writings of many ancients, including the Greek poet, Theognis, who lived in the sixth century BC who wrote, "The best for man were not to have been born and not to have seen the light of the Sun, but if once born, the second best for him is to pass through the gates of death as speedily as may be." However, as Nietzsche explained, pessimism is only a preliminary form of nihilism. No matter how much suffering, pain, and hardship one is forced to endure in life, nihilism will not arise as long as one has the conviction that there is a purpose or meaning to life.

The popularity of Christianity lay in the fact that it could provide people from all walks of life, even the crippled, incurably sick, and dirt-poor, the conviction that despite all the suffering and evil they had to endure in their lifetime, their life ultimately had a purpose. As Ernest Becker put it, "The most remarkable achievement of the Christian world picture is that it could take slaves, cripples, imbeciles, the simple, and the mighty and make them all secure heroes simply by taking a step back from the world into another dimension of things – the dimension called heaven." In his book, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life*, Julian Young explains that for most of our Western history, we have not talked about the meaning of life. This is because we used to be quite certain we knew what it was, and it was Christianity which provided Western civilization with that answer to the question, "What is the meaning of life?"

But as is well known, the role Christianity played in the Western world began to falter in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it was the ascendancy of science which was primarily responsible for this decline in adherence to Christian dogma. Nietzsche used the phrase "God is dead" to symbolize the loss of faith in the two-world theory of Christianity and understood that with this loss of faith, a crisis regarding the

meaning of life was inevitable. If one looks back to the beginning of the scientific revolution, it is obvious that science and nihilism go hand in hand. This idea is captured by a quote from the modern Nobel prize-winning physicist, Stephen Weinberg, who stated that "the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless." Nietzsche, in his book, *The Gay Science*, reiterates the idea that science and the meaninglessness of life go hand in hand. He wrote, "A scientific interpretation of the world – as you understand it – might therefore still be one of the most stupid of all possible interpretations of the world, meaning that it would be one of the poorest in meaning. This thought is intended for the ears and consciences of our mechanism nowadays, who like to pass as philosophers and insist that mechanics is the doctrine of the first and last law on which all existence must be based, as on the ground floor, but an essentially mechanical world would be an essentially meaningless world. Assuming that one estimated the value of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas, how absurd would such a scientific estimation of music be? What would one have comprehended, understood, grasped of it? Nothing really, nothing of what is music in it."

A theory espoused by the philosopher Giordano Bruno in the late 16th century has been pointed to as one of the early scientific seeds of nihilism and it is a good example of the way in which scientific theories degraded the meaning that people found in religious worldviews. In combining the views of Copernicus with his heliocentric universe, Nicolas of Kusa and his idea of the infinite nature of the universe, and the views of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Anaximander and Democritus, concerning atoms, Bruno put forth a theory where the Sun was only one of an infinite number of stars scattered throughout an infinite universe. Bruno also suggested that there could be other planets accompanying some of these stars where life might exist. This clearly did not fit in with the Christian view of the day, which had maintained a superior place in the cosmos for humans, but rather seriously degraded man's place in the universe. While science provided answers to many practical questions and improved life in many unforeseen ways, unlike religion, science did not provide answers to questions concerning the purpose and meaning of life. Rather, it instigated a skeptical attitude which merely cast doubt on the views of Christianity and other religions. Nietzsche, writing in the late 19th century, seems to have anticipated the growing wave of nihilism which would grip the Western world, especially following World War One.

He understood that Christianity had thus far provided individuals with the conviction that life had meaning and therefore, with the death of God, a feeling that life is meaningless would inflict ever more people. Modern civilization, Nietzsche thought, would be defined by how this feeling was dealt with and eventually overcome. In the opening of Nietzsche's work titled *The Will to Power*, he says: "What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I described what is coming, what can no longer come differently, the advent of nihilism. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade, relentlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect."

Chapter 3 - Part 9 - Progression

Here I do not want my message to be mixed up and confused with the likes of traditionalists, or primitivists, I am not making the point here that life is getting worse, or in a way regressing, I am making a point purely in favour of descriptive stagnation, that we are neither moving net forward or net backward rather we are more akin to a wheel simply spinning upon its axis.

To make this point clear I will briefly touch upon two, commonly seen, points of regression and present them as progression. The first of these is the fact that fossil fuel emissions have brought on a global greening effect.

1

Chapter 3 - Part 10 - CO₂ Pollution (Global Greening)

CO₂ Pollution when discussed in common parlance is often seen as being only a negative, and although I am not trying to undermine the negative aspects of CO₂ Pollution, to disregard the existence of its positive consequences, would be an incorrect position to hold.

A study by Shilong Piao et al published in *Nature*, found that "Vegetation greenness has been increasing globally since at least 1981 when satellite technology enabled large-scale vegetation monitoring.....Greening is pronounced over intensively farmed or afforested areas, such as in China and India, reflecting human activities. However, strong greening also occurs in biomes with low human footprints, such as the Arctic, where global change drivers play a dominant role. Vegetation models

suggest that CO₂ fertilization is the main driver of greening on the global scale, with other factors being notable at the regional scale.”

Along with this, the model suggests that “that greening could mitigate global warming by increasing the carbon sink on land and altering biogeophysical processes, mainly evaporative cooling.” this finding was corroborated in a study done by NASA, that found that “ increased vegetation growth during the recent decades, known as the “Greening Earth”, has a strong cooling effect on the land due to increased efficiency of heat and water vapor transfer to the atmosphere.”

2

Chapter 3 – Part 11 – Secular Stagnation (Environmental exploitation)

What economists call “secular stagnation” has been around since the 1930s. Being described as the idea that a combination of an aging population, low rates of immigration, and the exhaustion of technological progress would lead to an imbalance between excess household savings and inadequate business investment. The result would be an extended period of little to no economic growth. The theory got new traction in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis thanks to Harvard economist Lawrence Summers. As he saw it, the main reason the economy struggled to recover from the Great Recession was secular stagnation: an increased propensity to save and a decreased propensity to invest, leading to “shortfalls in demand and stunted growth.”

The era of secular stagnation has led to decreased exploitation of land, as although the exploitation of land might be increasing, the rate at which it would increase if this era of stagnation did not exist would be remarkably more profound.

Chapter 3 – Part 12 – Spin

The world and society, as all things are, are in a (perceived) state of constant flux and movement. Just like one cannot have an object lacking space and time, so too can one not perceive an object whilst not also perceiving the subjective phenomena of growth and decay. Yet, here lies the question, is it possible that one can sum up existence as moving towards or away, growth or decay, progress or regress?

Four problems lie before us:

1. The first of many problems would be discerning how exactly one would sum up all of the “good” and “bad”, and come to the conclusion that one is now greater in value than it was before, and also that one is lesser in value than it was previously, at the same time assessing not just each of the antonyms previous states, relative to their current, but also which one abounds more currently, within the chosen paradigm. One must wonder what factors would come into play? How would one quantify the intensity of feeling, if it was to be quantified at all? Maybe one might even wish to include the time in which the individual is experiencing the good or the bad, and if so, what would be the method for attaining such information?
2. For the second reason let's, for sake of argument, imagine that one did have such an ability, then another question arises. What moralistic system would be applied here? Utilitarianism? Consequentialism? Deontology? Maybe even ethical egoism if one is so inclined. Regardless of the system of ethics one may choose to employ, the problem at hand remains unaided, and yet paramount to the question's answer. The multivariate forms of ethical reasoning which I have just espoused brings into question the very definition of “the good”, which now hangs in the balance and would vary from person to person. Is it that something can be net and so subjective?

If it is true here that the nature of good is so tightly bound to the perceiver, does not another problem, even more pernicious than the last arise, and is such a problem, not the sole problem pertaining to humanity's cohabitation with itself? The view, by one that the world is moving forward, contrasted by another, that the world (or a certain aspect of the world) is moving in regress is the cause for all war on the macro level, and on the micro level the cause of all disagreements.

3. The third of these problems brings into account temporality when attempting to assign goodness. This is best exemplified in the, “what do I know of these things” story.

There is a story told in Eastern folklore of a man who lost his horse. When the horse ran away, the neighbor came to him and said, “you know, bad luck, isn't it, your horse is gone.” The man then responded, “what do I know about these things?” A few days later, the horse came back with 20 other wild horses and the neighbor came and said; “amazing. It's not bad luck, it's good

luck. You've got 20 more horses.” then the man responds saying, “what do I know about these things?”, then the man's young son is going and taming one of the new horses. That young horse kicks him and breaks his leg. The neighbor comes and says, “Terrible, isn't it? Your son's leg is broken. Bad luck that these horses came.” The man says, “what do I know about good luck and bad luck?” A few days go by and a bunch of thugs come in looking for recruits to join their gang, they're looking for all the able-bodied young men, and they're about to pick this young man, but find out his leg is broken. And they say, we don't want him, we're going to move on to the next house. So the man comes and says, “Good luck, isn't it? Your son's leg was broken”. then the man responds by saying, “what do I know about these things?” This series of events can go on ad infinitum and proves the point that if non-temporally bound no action can be seen as being net good or net bad.

4. The fourth and final of my critiques here will be a critique of the idea of progress itself. For one to progress, first, it is necessary to have an aim, something that one is striving towards, an end goal, at which one can say *Defunctus est* (it is finished). Can such a statement be made about society, humanity, or even the state of existence as a whole?

We as individuals might have our own respective goals and aspirations in life, things we see as being meaningful to us, but is it even possible for an asentient mass to perceive meaning? These meaningful actions which we perceive arise from 3 substrates: reference, desire, and terminus. One might find meaning in becoming a doctor, a painter, a sculptor, or a pianist because they have first seen that others were able to achieve this end. Through the knowledge of others' actions, one gains the insight that such terrain is pathable. Without such knowledge, one could have found no such meaning. If one never knows the piano how can one aim to be a pianist?

Knowledge alone is not enough however, one also needs desire for the craft. Even if a man knows of the piano, it does not mean that he is drawn to make it his life's meaning. There first needs to be an innate prerequisite desire for such actions.

The last of such necessary prerequisites would be a terminus, an endpoint, a point at which one can achieve their aim. Around this point, there is some contention, as one's aim may never be within reach, and instead, it is the

striving that gives meaning. Yet, is it not that such striving in and of itself indicates terminus? If one can say that they are moving forward, then so too must they agree that there is a point they are aiming for, a higher level in which they strive to achieve. Even if one's aim seems to be constantly striving upward, if not constrained to our mortality one would be able to be a pianist in the throne room of heaven, from such a position there is no advancement, as such, there is terminus.

Now take these 3 predicates, reference, desire, and a terminus, and consider humanity as a species, what is its reference? the birds? The trees? The Reptiles? The other beasts? Is it that man aims to be like any of these creatures, not just to encompass one feature but to strive to become its likeness? I'd think not. Think now of desire, what is it that we as a species desire? Can a species even desire, does it have the necessary facilities to undertake such an action, rather humanity itself is an amorphous mass clambering in every which way, in a balancing act of freedom and stability? Humanity does not strive for anything beyond sheer propagation, and now even such a striving is in contention. Now, lastly, does humanity have a terminus? Where lies its endpoint? As I have stated prior, without an aim, there can be no endpoint, there can be no point at which humanity's work is done, and such is the reason for its spinning.

Chapter 3 - Part 13 - Exchange

Now let us regress back to the beginning of the chapter, the idea of the first law of alchemy, that being the law of equivalent exchange. When it comes to the concept of equivalent exchange, by the examples I have just given, it might be seen as being impossible for me to assess the events I have mentioned and say that that which has been given is equal to that which has been received. Here lies a misunderstanding, the idea of something being given implies an initial action, and getting something back being the reaction, to said action. However, the problem with this is that there are no actions in play here, only reactions.

All that we see as actions truly are only reactions, ripples from the first mover, and products from the beginning of our time. For this reason, it is impossible to give anything, and for that reason what we get in return so too is nothing, and as such the exchange is equivalent.

From this description, however, one might find that there is no balance of things and that there are no antonyms, however, this too is a misunderstanding. If one was to extrapolate out all reactions that ever happened and would ever happen, it would have to be that the totality of events in a given bimodal hierarchy are equal in their opposition. This is because when any hierarchy is looked at in totality each extreme is equal and opposite in magnitude. Let us use the hierarchy of temperature for example, with the antonyms being hot/heat and cool/cold. Then if we were to conceptualize the totality of temperature as a line, with “hot” being at one end, and “cold” at the other; and then were to ask, “are the totality of things, more hot, or more cold?”, it would be the equivalent of asking one, “is there more top, or more bottom?” It is the lesser that necessitates the greater. The same experiment can be done for the theory of progression and regression, however subjective one’s views might be, in all instances, they will find, by use of this theory, regression, and progression are indeed endemic to one another, presuming one does indeed believe them to be antonyms. (if one wonders why I used a line here, and why I didn't use a 2d or 3d object, it is because there was only 1 dimension in question, that being temperature).

Here it is important not to use appetitive or aversive feelings, or those words that are in part synonymous with pleasure or pain. In such a case you are not measuring the external world, but rather one's pleasure or pain response to the external world, and testing said higher and lower quadrants of oneself. Let us say, for example, one were to ask, “is there more good or bad taste in the world?” This would be the same as asking, “does man have a predilection more towards bad taste or towards good taste?” Such is simply a regionally bound version of the question of whether the body is more prone to pleasure or pain. There is no need for such a test, as it is known that pain abounds more than pleasure. If one wants to test the appetitive or aversive nature of progression and regression, think simply about how temporality comes into play when speaking of progression and regression, and then compare it to how we judge the pleasurable or painful nature of a stimulus by temporally bound parameters, pleasure and pain are experienced in the now.

This chapter could be summarised in a simple phrase: wherever there are winners, so too must there be losers, and it is not uncommon that such loss is able to breed malevolence.

Sorrowful Smiles

The Negative In The Positive, And the Positive In The Negative

Decent begets decent,
And ascension begets its likeness.
For when one rises
Does he use wings?
Does he soar?
Cast into a pit of despair
He climbs out on the corpses



When one is at their lowest, ideas of a point lower than their own often surface in order to give relief and solace, but then what is one in an even worse position to do? It is, maybe, that they too should think of one in an even worse plight than their own. And then what for the next? Ideas that once brought solace now fall upon empty shells, turtles all the way down it once was, yet now, only ghosts and visages remain. Is it not better to look up? The sight above is blinding. Above lies 1000 suns, and many have tried to peer at their excellence, however when one sees the stars in their unrequited glory, quickly they are consumed by blindness, and eternally their purpose remains dark, vanta-black, as such, it is best to keep one's eyes fixed below. What is it that's below? It is the inferiority that makes one superior, it is the down that necessitates the upwards, and the greater gives meaning to the lesser. This is the way in which we all construct our lives, and it is that joy and sadness most commonly abound when taken with respect to ourselves relative to others. Even the act of gratitude is nothing more than pious schadenfreude.

Chapter 4 - Part 1 - Combustible Envy (schadenfreude)

Though envy abounds to a greater degree in some, and to a lesser degree in others, it is a constituent endemic to humanity. When we are shown one that is greater than ourselves or one that has that which we desire, yet do not lay claim to, the way in which envy boils up, is only reflexive, and evidence for the heat of man's avarice.

Yet, even on the opposing side, when one's lot is not much to be envied, the existence of such inferiority brings one great cheer, yet for such joy to enter our hearts it must wear a facade and masquerade itself so that we are not reminded of the hot wax of the Marquis de Sade's sadism.

Chapter 4- Part 2 - Gratitude

Gratitude, at its core, is the feeling of joy in that which one has and is often manifest in taking time to think of the little, or even at times, big things that happen in one's life on a daily basis, that one may feel joy towards. Gratitude can also manifest itself interpersonally, in the act of giving joy to another for something that they have done for you. Yet the question stands, what is it exactly, that one is truly grateful for?

When one feels (non-interpersonal) gratitude, is such gratitude, not simply a joy derived from the existence of that which is below them? If it is the case that one should feel joy because they are in a better situation than another, does this joy not predicate the existence of that which is in a lower state? Think for example of the act of writing down what one is grateful for, maybe something along the lines of "I am happy for my house", (this could be exchanged for quite literally anything that one has) crosses one's mind. Is it not true, that this could be rephrased as "I am happy, that I am not someone that doesn't have a house?" You see in the recomposition of such a phrase lies the problem, the pain of the lesser is essential and not incidental to the creation of one's joy from gratitude.

Think even now about the levels of gratitude, and what level invokes the most joy. Is it not that the commonality, of the event, and the unimpressiveness of the position in a particular hierarchy, are inversely proportional to the joy derived from gratitude? For example, if one was to feel thankful for the existence of their hands, their tongue, or their ability to breathe, would such gratitude bring more joy, than if one was to think of privileges more unique to them, such as particular friends, family, or even one's prized possessions? Surely the latter would arouse greater joy.

If it is true here, that the latter arises greater joy, and it is also true that the impressiveness of one's position is dependent on the quantity of those who sit below such a position, then is it not the case that the magnitude of the joy derived from gratitude is not simply an equivocation for the sheer mass of those who are inferior to oneself.

To this one might respond: "could it not be the case that those who I derive gratitude from could simply be noncorporeal, merely conceptualized, and never actualized?" to this point I would simply rebut with the idea of realism. Think of yourself having a bad day at work, and in an attempt to cheer yourself up you think about what you are grateful for, and this idea comes to mind: "well at least I'm not currently getting waterboarded, whilst having all of my limbs cut off". Though I'm

sure everyone can agree that this is a very negative experience, this experience is too far removed from our own reality in order to invoke the feeling of gratitude, and far less a feeling of joy from said gratitude.

Think, however, of one that goes to a country in which there is no running water, no air cooling, or electricity. (presuming this person was in a country where they had all these things prior) Is it not at this point that one becomes truly grateful for that which they once had? When one is mired in endless pain, abounding strife, and palpable inferiority, at that point is it not that one is more grateful than ever? The point at which that which is lesser than oneself is not just known but felt.

Think of even interpersonal gratitude. When it comes to interpersonal gratitude, is the joy derived from such an event not simply, us indulging in our all too common narcissistic clandestine pleasures?

Do not think here that I am trying to malign the feeling of gratefulness, it is indeed true that one should feel grateful. Yet, it is also important that one truly knows the face of gratitude, its abounding blemishes, and sunken eyes. See what it is that brings you joy, then see one's self and the world around them, so too do blemishes abound. And for those who are blemishless, is it not that we wish blemish upon them?

Chapter 4- Part 2 - Schadenfreude - Much of the following will be from Smith et al -

Schadenfreude, or the pleasure derived by someone from another person's misfortune, is one of the most common, and prevalent emotions. To see someone that we envy, dislike, or even were previously apathetic towards, fall down the hierarchy, can bring us great joy, but why is it that such emotion even arises?

When we don't feel empathy or sympathy for a person, that sympathy or empathy is replaced by schadenfreude or its potentiality. This is because self-extrapolation is endemic to humans, it is a product of our tribal nature, that which we do not feel empathy or sympathy for is not in our tribe, therefore its descent could very well mean the indirect ascension of our tribe, particularly if the opposing tribe is in a higher position than our own.

There have been studies that show that the emotions of envy and Schadenfreude are often closely linked. Although envy is painful and Schadenfreude is pleasurable, it can be hypothesized that envy creates the conditions under which Schadenfreude should occur if a misfortune befalls the envied person.

Envy is a complex emotion with a number of facets. It can be a uniquely unpleasant experience. As Silver and Sabini (1978) note, envy is the one “sin” that has no obvious pleasure joined with it. Envy is unpleasant in part because self-evaluations are so often derived from how well or poorly we compare with other people on self-relevant hierarchies. When we feel envy, it means that we lack something important to us, and this lack is made apparent by social comparison.

A rich tradition of scholarly work suggests that envy also involves a sense that the envied person’s advantage is undeserved (e.g., Hazlitt, 1823/1932; Heider, 1958; Nietzsche, 1880/1911; Parrott, 1991; Russell, 1930; Smith, 1991; Smith, Parrott, Ozer, & Moniz, 1994). In Heider’s (1958) view, the envying person desires the “equalization of lots,” especially if the advantaged person is similar in most other important ways. The sense of injustice results from psychological balance forces that require that similar people “ought” to have similar fortunes. Even though societal norms dictate that we celebrate the good fortunes of others, privately we may resent the envied person’s advantage because they exist in a higher position than one’s selves, which is the very reason for the existence of one’s lesser position, and specifically, why one’s position is not higher.

The sense of injustice in envy may help explain why a third typical feature of envy involves hostility and dislike. It is natural to feel hostility if someone has an undeserved advantage (Brown, 1986), even if the claim of injustice must remain a private grievance because it lacks social validation.

Although envy is usually painful, scholarly traditions also point to another side to envy, one that can actually lead to pleasure rather than pain (e.g., Elster, 1989; La Rochefoucauld, 1678/1959; Mora, 1987; Neu, 1980; Plato, 427–348 B.C./1925; Schoeck, 1969). Socrates, in Plato’s *Philebus*, argued that envy is actually an emotion in which pain and pleasure are mixed with each other because it is the envious person whom we see “rejoicing in the misfortunes of his neighbors” (p. 333), the purest form of Schadenfreude.

Envy, unsurprisingly, appears to fulfill many of the conditions for Schadenfreude if the envied person suffers a misfortune. One situation in which another's misfortune should be pleasing is when the misfortune benefits us in some way (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). Invidious comparisons seem native to competitive arenas in which people struggle for scarce resources (e.g., Nozick, 1974; Sullivan, 1953). A misfortune befalling an envied competitor leads to the envying person's direct gain, and therefore the misfortune should please. Also, misfortune can cut away at the very basis of envy because it renders the advantaged person less enviable due to their decreased hierarchical position. And so accompanying the Schadenfreude is agreeable feelings of relief caused by the decrease in envy.

The sense of injustice in envy should provide a further basis for feeling pleased over a misfortune befalling the envied person. In general, just as it is natural to feel angry and hostile when someone commits an injustice (Brown, 1986), it may be correspondingly natural to feel pleased if this same person suffers a setback especially if this person is hoist with his or her own petard. Even if the misfortune is qualitatively different from the injustice originally committed, there may be a pleasurable sense that a wrong has been righted and that a form of justice, poetic justice, has been served. Although the sense of injustice in envy may lack social validation, a misfortune befalling the envied person may still please in a private way, because now, to use Heider's terms, this person's situation better matches what "ought" to be.

Pleasure at an envied person's misfortune should also occur because of the hostility and dislike that envy usually generates. If we dislike someone, his or her misfortune should be pleasing to a degree (Feather, 1989; Heider, 1958; Ortony et al., 1988). Although the antipathy created by envy will lack public favor, it should still provide the envying person with yet another reason to feel pleased, at least privately, when a misfortune befalls the envied person.

The methodology of the study goes as follows: Subjects saw one of two versions of a tape. The same actor played the role of the student, but in the superior condition, details were fashioned to make him appear outstanding in terms of academic achievements, research and hospital experience, extracurricular activities, social life, and the likelihood of getting into a good medical school. In the average condition, he was shown engaging in the same basic activities, but his actual achievements were similar to an average student. In the superior version, his grade point average was 3.85; in the average version, it was 3.0. In the superior version, his

job in a research laboratory involved contributing to “cutting edge” work on a complex growth hormone, whereas in the average version, his job involved washing glassware. In the superior version, he noted that he was on the university tennis team, and a shot was included of him playing tennis with his attractive girlfriend; in the average version, he simply noted that he liked playing tennis, and a shot was included of him taking tennis lessons. In the superior version, when asked about his chances of getting into medical school, he revealed that his adviser believed he would be able to get into Harvard; in the average version, he noted that “he would be very happy to get in anywhere.”

As expected, both dispositional envy and target person superiority were associated with greater episodic envy, indicating that the target person manipulation was successful in creating envy, or those who were shown the superior student felt heightened feelings of envy, regardless of their innate predisposition towards feelings of envy. A greater degree of Schadenfreude was experienced at the misfortune of the superior target person, than at the misfortune of the average target person.

The results of this study, I'm sure, are largely unsurprising to most, as schadenfreude is a feeling which is so prevalent it often has to be repressed. If one is questioning why some people feel schadenfreude to a greater or lesser extent than others it is often due to how that person constructs their tribe and their division of ingroup and outgroup.

This is most evident in politics, if someone who you want to win the next election has something bad happen to them it is likely that you will not feel any joy or schadenfreude from that. The reason for this is simple, you are that person. For all intents and purposes when looking at how you are presented on the hierarchy, both your ascent and descent are inextricably linked. Yet, if someone that we did not want to win was to have something bad happen to them, this would most likely exhibit schadenfreude, especially depending on how much one has internalized said hierarchy.

Chapter 4- Part 3 - Matthew

There is a common phrase from the bible, in particular, the book of Matthew which goes as follows: “For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

This verse is often used in order for people to validate the injustices in the world, making a point for why some people have much, and why others have very little, this point by itself I would agree with, yet they rarely stop there. Such thinkers as Steven Pinker quote statistics about how there are fewer wars, less famine, less infant mortality, and so on, but is it that a world with less pain, is a world with more pleasure?

Pain and pleasure are not the only two players in this game, so too are their neutrality, boredom, apathy, and anhedonia, is it that these, although not painful, are pleasurable? Schopenhauer in his studies in pessimism writes, "Certain it is that work, worry, labor and trouble, form the lot of almost all men their whole life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? what would they do with their time? If the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or hang themselves; or there would be wars, massacres, and murders; so that in the end mankind would inflict more suffering on itself than it has now to accept at the hands of Nature." a point which was also posited by Fyodor Dostoevsky in his Notes from the underground states, "what can be expected of man since he is a being endowed with strange qualities? Shower upon him every earthly blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness so that nothing but bubbles of bliss can be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, such that he should have nothing else to do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and even then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some nasty trick."

The points being made here about the lot of man, are not simply that man desires pain, or that the innate aversive nature of pain is in fact appetitive, but rather they are exemplifying, the palpable disgust that man feels towards boredom, and such disgust is not simply theory, but has also been actualized through studies on the topic.

In a study from Chantal Nederkoorn et al titled "Self-inflicted pain out of boredom" the abstract states: previous research has shown that in response to a monotonous, boring lab situation, non-clinical participants voluntarily self-administer electric shocks. The shocks probably served to disrupt the tedious monotony: they were the only available external source of stimulation. According to this latter explanation, the induction of other negative emotions would also increase the administration of shocks. To test this explanation, 69 participants watched a monotonous, sad, or

neutral film fragment, during which they could self-administer electric shocks. Participants in the boredom condition self-administered more shocks and with higher intensity, compared to both the neutral and sadness condition. Sadness had no effect on the self-administration of shocks.

This study, although having a fairly small sample size, proves the exact point I am trying to make. if it is true that there is less pain in the world, it might not be the case that this pain is replaced by pleasure, and it seems that pain, and apathy or neutrality, seem to both be aversive in nature.

Yet, is it not true that though the reduction of pain does not directly lead to an increase in pleasure, there has still been an increase in pleasure in the world? This on the surface seems to be a fair point, however, when you get below the surface, its falsity is made known.

Pleasure, in essence, is comparative and adaptive. The comparative nature of pleasure can take reference from one's past self, for example, if someone gets a present for Christmas that they wanted, this would lead to an increase in pleasure, because you are now in a better state than you were previously. The other way in which pleasure is comparative is caused by one being in a superior position to another, let's say, for example, you might be happy because you are stronger or faster than another, (for reference, the first form of comparison is non-experientially dictated categories, and the second would be social locutionary hierarchy). The adaptive nature of pleasure refers to the fact, that after some time, having a good thing happen to us, even if that good thing happens continually, we will return to baseline happiness regardless.

Here lies the issue, the adaptive nature of pleasure means that pleasure needs to be constantly superseded by another greater pleasure in order to stave off adaptation, in the same way, that progressive overload is needed when looking for progress in the gym. It could be said that joy, if not superseded by greater joy, leads to apathy, and great joy, followed by a lesser pleasure, induces despair. Look for example at the child actor, peaking at such an early age, the rest of their life, even if seeming to be good to others, will always pale in comparison to such previous euphoria. Now think of a man served only Michelin 5-star meals, if he was to have a common low-value takeaway, his joy, for that moment would be lost. Think even about the perpetual consumption of the same such greatness, no brighter nor dimmer, does it not after time lose its sheen, no longer does it inspire the awe it once did, the

novelty has worn thin. Imagine one who drives over a great bridge in order to get to work. The first time he sees it he is in awe, the second less so, the third even less, until an awe-inspiring journey becomes a simple commute. Joy that is not the progenitor of greater joy, is nothing more than a momentary high, and a precursor to apathy.

There still lies another problem, that being the problem of comparison, the chief killer of joy, and pleasure. The enemy now is not another nation, it is existence itself. It is said, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) such a verse has never been more true. We are constantly shown, at the same time, how both good and bad the world is, that it has become evident that there is no real enemy to fight, the enemy that we fight is that which we could have been, if only.

Take two people, both of them are able to lift 100kg on bench press, for one, he is one of the strongest people around, however, for the other, he is one of the weakest, with many of his friends being stronger than him. Although nothing to do with the material conditions of these two are different, the joy derived from these two actions are antithetical to one another.

Take this example and stretch it to the entire world. On social media we are constantly bombarded by people who are infinitely better than ourselves, in every single way, shape, and form, they are quite literally just a superior species. This constant perception works against our brain's mapping.

Before when you were in a tribe, and there were a lot of people doing better than you, it meant that you were doing something wrong, and you had to change something. This was an essential part of our evolution. Now, however, even if you are in the top 10 percent of the population, there are still 800,000,000 people who are better than you. This wasn't a problem before, because you were not able to see these people, but now it is near enough impossible to not see them.

Here lies the issue, our brains love to generalize. This is why cherry-picking is such a good way to convince people of your points. We don't see that this person is in the top 0.001 percent, and if he was in our tribe, he would probably be acknowledged as some sort of god, all we see is that there are 80,000 of them, and that's one hell of a number of people to be inferior to.

They aren't happy because they are inferior.
They aren't sad because they aren't in pain.
Therefore they are the worst of all, apathetic.

Let us give such thinkers as pinker even more rope here, let's say it is the case that both the pain of humans in the world has reduced, and the pleasure of humans too has increased. Yet, here we have another philosophical quandary on our hands, that being if a tree was to fall, and no one was to hear it make a sound, did it indeed make any sound?

First, let us look at the subjectivity of pain. In 1995, the British Medical Journal published an astonishing report about a 29-year-old builder who pierced straight through his steel-toed boot. He was in such agonizing pain that even the smallest movement was unbearable. But, when the doctors took off his boot, they faced a surprising sight: the nail had never touched his foot at all. The study helped solidify, the fact that pain, can very much be dissociated with actual tissue damage, where an organism, can very well be in a state where it should feel absolutely fine, however it does not. This I would argue is the most optimistic view of the world.

Chapter 4- Part 4 - The love of losers

The fact of losers, as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of victors, in some cases, is not alone sufficient to bring the negative quality of being to light. Think of the words of Nietzsche, in Thus spoke Zarathustra, "With these preachers of equality will I not be mixed up and confounded. For thus speaks justice to me: "Men are not equal." And neither shall they become so! What would be my love to the overman, if I spoke otherwise?", or the common sentiment of new age intellectuals such as Jordan Peterson, speaking in favour of the losers loss as if one was not to lose, one wouldn't be able to bask in the glory of the winner. There is a perniciousness in the cheek, and a sharp tip on the tongue of those who speak such words. Let it be known once more what has been said prior, it is losers that make the winners, if this is true, would it not be that a winner, would desire more loss assuming said loss does not constitute themselves?

Hope, in essence, is most often a malformed idea that the world is a fair and logical place, that if we do what is required of us then so too will the world give unto us what we require of it. Such a conception of the world presupposes existence to be a

phenomenon that can be humane in the way that it cares about one's will, yet man stands face to face with the irrational.

Once the multitude of negative and immutable characteristics of being are inquired into, it is common for one to respond emphatically with the statement “the world isn’t fair”. Yet such a profoundly problematic statement is often said with little consequence on the part of the speaker as if the statement itself is apathetic, or a mere analytical assertion, lacking vitriol, and devoid very much so of the weight of blood. This statement, though it is true, is also somewhat of a useless statement, as it often misses the point in regards to the question that is being asked, responding descriptively instead of prescriptively.

Wherever there are those who disdain the state of the world, so too are there those who revel in it, those who hide themselves in the carnage, so that they find respite from realities harsh winters chill. Say, for example, you live in a well-off town that is partially funded by a big oil tycoon, and then there was a vote, a binary vote asking whether or not the citizens of the town would want the oil tycoon to keep funding them, or if the oil extraction should stop. I'm sure you would want the oil extraction to continue, yet this is not the whole of the story. There is another town, the town in which the oil is being extracted. Because of this, the townspeople have to deal with the constant pollution caused by the mining of oil, if you were living in this town, I'm sure that you would want the mining to stop. Both of these people live in the same unfair world, however, one side is unfairly advantaged, whereas the other is unfairly disadvantaged, so when people talk about the world being unfair, remember it is not a rare event that the illocution of these two locutions could be antithetical to one another.

Hells Roots

The Corrupt Nature Of Heirachies

Rot,
Decay,
Filth,
Scourge,
Qliphoth's Compost.
Grow!



Think of victory as a cake, it is sweet to taste, and its saccharine nature combined with your sweet tooth makes such a delicacy nigh on transcendent. When one is in constant consumption the experience is divine, yet when consumption ends, when one is

satiated, or even gorged, at that point, there is an aftertaste. To call such a taste bitter would not be a correct assessment, it is as if sweetness itself was plucked from the memories of one's tastebuds, and taste itself cauterized. Even drinking the milk and honey of the highest place, now would leave one, at most, with a sense of apathy.

If one desires to have the juice from the fruit, first they must squeeze said fruit, in the same way that if one seeks to enjoy the joy brought about by the hierarchy, one must be in constant ascension. But then what is the lot of those who cannot ascend? Those who sit atop the hierarchies, or those who are unable to ascend through said hierarchy, and even those who currently inhabit maladaptive hierarchies, All are doomed to fail.

Chapter 5- Part 1 - Desire

Sentience and desired ascension are tautologies, all that lives desires to desire and strives to strive. This is why it is common for people who have just achieved a great feat, to often feel somewhat apathetic afterward. Think of a great achievement that you have accomplished in your life, at first, there is a sense of euphoria, or extreme joy, yet is it not often that this joy is replaced, after some point, by apathy?

Take for example Eddie Hall, one of the strongest people in the world, if not the strongest person in the world, after he completed his 500-kilo deadlift, for a time he was ecstatic about it, however that time was short-lived. Eddie Hall in his interview talks with Brian Rose about how he was lifting 500 kilos one day, and the next day he was at his son's birthday party, talking to the guests. Though the guests at the party were excited to hear about this event, at the end of the day he is still the same man he once was, to use Eddie Hall's own words, "You still have to take a shit like everyone else". There is also the pressing issue of what to do next, when one sits atop the hierarchy, there is no more ascension, it may very well be that Eddie could have hit 510kgs, or 520kgs next, however, at that point, one is simply competing against oneself, they have not ascended in the hierarchy, the novelty often wears thin.

It is not just that this issue is simply common, it is quite literally hardwired into our minds, through the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine increases when one is getting closer to achieving their goal and decreases when the goal is met. The

reason for this is because dopamine largely dictates movement, particularly movement towards a pleasurable stimulus, (this is what makes pleasure appetitive).

Dopamine is that which makes us feel good when we are working towards some kind of goal or ascending a particular hierarchy, however, when that goal is achieved we are no longer met with the same good feeling that we once got from dopamine. Speaking evolutionarily this trait was very necessary, as if we were to become complacent it would most likely lead to us dying. Constant advancement was the way that led to the highest rates of survival and such is the trait that currently resides in the vast majority of us, but what about those who cannot ascend?

When one attempts and fails, it is often thought that this is in some way a good thing, saying that the road to one's goals is built on failures. Yet, these people often only focus on those who actually succeed eventually at their task and rarely pay any mind to how those who fail, can often end up in a worse place than they originally started.

There was a study conducted by Nathan W. Hudson et.al, trying to see if people were able to change their big 5 personality traits, (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) with the methodology of the study going as follows: The present study was a 15-week intensive longitudinal design that tested 400 participants in whether engaging in trait-typical behaviors predicted trait change. Participants provided self-report ratings of their personality traits and were able to freely accept and complete weekly —prewritten behavioral goals that would pull their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in line with their desired traits.

Results indicated that merely accepting behavioral challenges did not predict trait changes. Rather, only actually completing challenges successfully (i.e., performing trait-typical behaviors) predicted trait change over time. Thus, merely wanting to change does not appear to be sufficient to evoke trait growth; successfully changing one's personality traits may require actively and successfully implementing behaviors to change oneself.

The black line represents an individual who, over the course of the entire 15-week study, completed two extraversion challenges per week



successfully. The grey line represents an individual who, over the course of the study, completed no extraversion challenges successfully.

Mere participation in an intervention did not appear to predict change in participants' personality traits across time. Rather, it was only successfully completing challenges that predicted trait growth, so trying wasn't what made the difference, succeeding was. But not only was that the case, but when one tried and failed, it led to them being in an even worse position than they were previously. When one attempts to climb a hierarchy, and it turns out that said attempts were in vain, it is not uncommon for that person to regress even further in the hierarchy.

Chapter 5- Part 2- Involution

- Much of the following will be taken from Manya Koeste Article in What's On-Weibo Titled - The Concept of 'Involution' (Nèijuǎn) on Chinese Social Media -

In many cultures, the hierarchies themselves are corrupt and maladaptive, often bringing about pain for all, such as in China with the idea of Nèijuǎn and Bai Lan. Nèijuǎn or Involution, as explained by Jialing Xie in his article in "what's on Weibo", can be described as the economic situation in which as the population grows, per capita wealth decreases". The term 'involution' and how it is used today comes from a work by American anthropologist Clifford Geertz titled *Agricultural Involution – The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (1963). In this work, Geertz explores the agricultural dynamics in Indonesia during the colonial period's Cultivation System, where a radical economic dualism existed within the country: a foreign, Dutch economy and a native, Indonesian economy. (p. 61-62)

Geertz describes how the Javanese faced a deepening demographic dilemma as they saw a rapidly growing population but a static economy, while the Dutch, who organized Javanese land and labor, was only growing in wealth (69-70). Agricultural involution is the "ultimately self-defeating process" that emerged in Indonesia when the ever-growing population was absorbed in high labor-intensive wet-rice cultivation without any changing patterns and without any progress (80-81). When Geertz used the term 'involution' to describe the dynamics in Indonesia, he built on the work of another American anthropologist, namely Alexander Goldenweiser, who also used the term to describe "those culture patterns which, after having reached what would seem to be a definitive form, nonetheless fail either to stabilize or transform themselves into a new pattern but rather continue to develop by becoming internally more complicated" (Geertz 1963, 81).

The popular use of the Chinese translation of ‘involution’, *nèijuǎn* 内卷, started to receive attention in Chinese media in 2020. It is deviating from the original use of the term and is meant to explain the social dynamics of China’s growing middle class.

As suggested in the article “‘Involution’: The Anxieties of Our Time Summed Up in One Word”, by Zhou Minxi (CGTN), the popularity of the term comes from “a prevalent sense of being stuck in an ever so draining rat race where everyone loses.” China’s ever-growing middle class is now facing the question of how they and their children can remain in the middle class in a situation where everyone is continuously working harder and doing all they can to rise above the rest. Xiang Biao, a professor of social anthropology at Oxford University, is quoted by Zhou: “The lower class still hopes to change their fate, but the middle and upper classes aren’t so much looking upward, and they are marked by a deep fear of falling downward. Their greater fear is perhaps losing what they already have.”

The term ‘involution’ often comes up together with criticism of China’s ‘996’ work system (working from 9 am–9 pm, 6 days a week). Although Alibaba founder Jack Ma once called the 12-hour working day a “blessing,” the system is a controversial topic, with many condemning how Chinese (tech) companies are exploiting their employees, who are caught in a conundrum; they might lose their sanity working such long hours, and might lose their job and future career prospects if they refuse to do so.

The notion of involution is conceptualized perfectly within “A Love for Dilemma” a 2021 TV drama directed by Zhang Xiaobo (张晓波), who also worked on other hit series including *Nothing But Thirty*. This season’s popular TV drama “A Love for Dilemma” is themed around family, parenting, and China’s competitive education system. In the series, two stepsisters compete against each other over the school results of their children. The family’s ‘grandpa’, played by famous actor Zhang Guoli (张国立), tries to create harmony around the dinner table between his daughter and stepdaughter, but the rivalry between the two and how they raise their children intensifies nevertheless.

While stepsister Tian Yulan urges her little son to work hard in school and focus on his grades so that he can go to the best high school and university, sister Nan Li places more emphasis on the general development of her children and wants them

to enjoy their childhood. Both mothers, however, question their own choices when facing challenges with how their children perform at school. The specific scene that has ignited current discussions is a dialogue between the husbands of the sisters, who sit outside to talk about the education system and how it sometimes feels like everyone is in a theatre watching a show together until one person stands up from their seat. This makes it necessary for other members of the audience to also stand up until everybody is standing. The dialogue continues, with the two talking about how it does not stop at the people standing up. Because then there are those who will take it a step further and will stand on their seats to rise above the others. And then there are even those who will grab a ladder to stand higher than the rest. But they are still watching the same show and their situation has actually not changed at all – except for the fact that everybody is now more uncomfortable than they were before.

This is a perfect example of what I had spoken about in previous chapters, a hierarchy in which everyone loses. These hierarchies often perpetuate themselves solely because of how entrenched they are in the culture of the land. Often these hierarchies are not even questioned and are simply thought to be a fact of life, as such, people have different ways of coping with this existence, the first being to adopt the hierarchy, the second, being to in part internalize the hierarchy but dilute it somewhat with the addition of other hierarchies, and the third, to put it most simply, would be described as accepting defeat.

Bai Lan is a Chinese phrase, (摆烂, or let it rot in English), is a rejection of this hierarchy, in exchange for valuing hedonistic pursuits, in particular, an attempt to attain ataraxia, looking for small pleasures in life, in combination with a sense of giving up on hierarchical ascension.

Examples of memes sent about Bai Lan on sites such as Weibo, Douban, and Bai du, goes as follows: “Someone has to be a loser. Why not me?”, “to smash a cracked pot”, and “dead pigs are not afraid of boiling water”, one person summarised how they embodied the movement as follows: “my life is a mess. My attitude to work, why don’t I quit my job! Gaming? Losing is fine. Weight loss? I don’t care if I die from obesity. Old age? I quit living.” Another said that they embody it in this way: “Previously when people called me a loser, I replied: Damn, who are you talking about? Now when people call me a loser, I reply, You’re a good judge of character”.

If one was to sum up, the logic of Bai lan, it would be that “trying hard doesn’t always pay off, however not trying means always being comfortable”. Though it is thought that these people are “dropping out of hierarchies” it is more that they are partaking in vicarious ascension. Living vicariously through different people, or characters, in movies, shows, videogames, or other forms of entertainment, and then superimposing these people's hierarchical ascension onto themselves. (i am in wholehearted agreement with the actions of those who practice Bai Lan, life is something to be endured, a burden that is to be coped with, and if such a coping mechanism is effective, then I salute those who champion it).

Chapter 5- Part 3- Vicarious ascension

When one finds themselves at the bottom of a hierarchy that they sought to sit atop, feelings of regret, envy, and general resentment begin to build, because of this people often wish to have another shot at ascension. However, different factors of their being often bind them and stop them from pursuing such a goal.

When one does not find their hierarchical ascension sufficient they often offset that hierarchy onto another and live vicariously through them. This can be done in two different ways.

The first of these being to live vicariously through their children. Often people are unable to realize that their children are not actually part of them, because in most ways in the psyche of the parent their child is more part of them than their hand or their leg. It is not uncommon for a mother to lose her own arm or leg, and feel less emotional, and physical pain when compared to the death of her own child. This is an inbuilt instinct, and it was put there so that mankind will be more likely to perpetuate their genes throughout time. There has been somewhat of a bastardization of this axiom whether intentional or not, this leads parents to put their own meaning in/with their child. Although this may seem like a lofty assignment of meaning really it is just offsetting the meaning onto an infinite chain that will go on forever but never really exist. Let's say that one person has a child, and they live vicariously through that child, then that child grows and has a child, with their own desires, and hierarchical preference, they will often offset their ascension once more, now onto their child, and so does the cycle continue.

These people are never actually finding something meaningful rather they are hoping and praying that the child they raise will find meaning, but they make the

fatal flaw that I spoke about prior, thinking themselves and the child are one and the same. Though the child may share some part of their DNA and the child might have been raised by them, that does not mean that the parent has autonomy over the child throughout their life.

Many parents will try and give their children that which they did not have when they were growing up, to the extent of them forcing the activity, or life path upon them, from doing karate when they were young, to becoming a doctor, the meaning of the child in this situation cannot flourish throughout their lives to any meaningful extent. So they must do the same as their parent, forcing their child to live out the life which they would have wanted to lead. Even when it does not look like this is being done, think for example of a parent that allows their child to do whatever they want in life, that still is the parent's meaning of wanting to do whatever they want being thrust upon the child, (also the idea of “doing whatever you want doesn't exist, it is just an obfuscation of the parental prescriptive role, to allow other factors to take the place which you would normally hold.

The second is living vicariously through those who are already greater than yourself. How many people will you know in your own life that are more interested in what is happening in the life of their favorite celebrity than their own? Maybe you know someone who will sit through multiple hour twitch streams of someone playing a video game, treating the skill of the streamer as their own, at least for the duration which you are watching, calling someone who is in the same skill bracket as the streamer but who is slightly worse at the game “trash”, knowing very well that you are multiple skill brackets below them.

Perhaps you are a sports fan or know of one, referring to the team with personal pronouns, did you see the goal we just scored, did you see the play that we just made, did you see that we made it to playoffs, although there may be no relationship with the watcher and the player whatsoever. Think even of playing a video game, in this time, when you are truly engrossed in the game you somewhat become the character that you are playing. You are no longer what you once were, now, finally, a hierarchy exists in which you can dominate others.

When questioned on whether people would like to live in a machine that can simulate the happiest reality possible for that person, they could be a superhero, everyone could love them, and they could effectively be the best versions of themselves possible. Most people say that they would not want this, as what is the

point of solving world hunger in the machine world if it still exists in the “real world”? However, as life goes on people move more and more into this machine world than they would ever be willing to admit. These people actualize hierarchies vicariously through video games, online videos, streams, and celebrities, projecting themselves onto these people and imagining that they were living their lives. This is to be somewhat expected as why would you want to be you when you could be someone so much better, smarter, and more handsome? As time goes on and the divide between the average and the exceptional begins to grow, more and more people will begin to live in this vicarious manner until they find themselves consumed by the machine that they so resoundingly denounced.

Chapter 5- Part 4- Hierarchical centralization

It is often thought that if one tries enough they can break out of the hierarchical system, and no longer be bound by any hierarchy, a type of hierarchy minimization of sorts. Attempts at this can be seen in the ideas of minimalism, and different monk, and nun sects. However, all that is happening here is that different hierarchies are being put in place.

These sorts of lifestyles often have with them extreme rules of what one can, and what one cannot do, in essence, it is a game, in which they see those who aren't as devoted as themselves to be impious, irreverent, or more simply to be “losing”. Think, for example, of someone who is a nun, if somehow they get tempted and fall pregnant, they sit at the very bottom of the nun hierarchy, so much so that they will likely not even be called a nun anymore. One cannot live without hierarchies, rather life in and of itself is a hierarchy assuming that one is sentient.

Chapter 5- Part 5 - Vacuous value

Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, brings up an interesting point, particularly pertaining to maladaptive hierarchies. Baudrillard posits that in the consumerist societies in which we live, we no longer buy commodities for their utility or monetary value, but for their “sign value”, and what the commodity “simulates”. The best example of this is money. Money, in essence, has no value in and of itself, it is only when you buy things with that money that the value of that money is manifest, however, people will still acquire more money than they will ever be able to use, for merely status reasons. In this case, the money has lost its

value as a means to an end, to become an end in and of itself, or a means in order to simply get status.

Heavens branches

The Glimmers Of Hope

The rose seeks the light,
Whilst also yearning for darkness,
Ascent, and descent
Each one as the other,
Sefirot's Qliphoth.



The choice of one's parents should be a diligent matter for all. Many factors come into play, one's height, attractiveness, country of birth, dialect, character traits, loves, hates, illnesses, perceptions of the world .etc. One's nurture and nature are decided right here, the most important decisions of our lives, yet we do not exist to make them.

It is often thought that ascension happens because of one's own will, we all acknowledge that there will be nepotism or people that we don't think belong in the position that they are in for one reason or the next. But the stories which we always love to hear are those of ascension against all odds, the iconic rags to riches stories, however, is it true that these people ever wore those rags?

Chapter 6 – Part 1 – Made or Born

- Much of the following is taken from Veritasum and Thoughty2 -

The rags-to-riches story perfectly exemplifies how, as humans, we compare in excess, and how error-prone our comparisons truly are. We as humans often derive hope from what we are able to become, this is most often done through comparison, we, however, do not only compare ourselves to who we were before but also to others who we see as better than ourselves in one aspect or many. The main problem with this kind of comparison is not the comparison itself; rather, the real problem is that we do not do this nearly well enough. When comparing ourselves to others we work off a somewhat simple basis; proximity, age, race, and nationality, these seem to be the main factors in most cases, however, we fail to take into account the most important factors relating to genetics and upbringing.

A perfect example of this would be Kobe Bryant, people often bring him up as someone who worked harder and stayed on the court and the gym for more time than many of his peers and that's why he is so good, however, this is not the case, Kobe Bryant was 6'4 and born to a pro basketball player father, it would not be a far stretch to say that Kobe was in some way engineered to play basketball. Take a man who is 5 foot 10 and allow him to work twice as hard for four times as many hours, he would not be nearly as successful or in nearly as good a position as Kobe, get a man who is 6'4 with no pro basketball player father, he would not be nearly as good as Kobe, even take a man who is 6'4 with a basketball-playing father, he still will not be as good as Kobe Bryant, why? Because there is a litany of other factors that went into making Kobe Bryant the man that he was, the least of these being hard work. When looking into the lives of those who are the most successful it is common to find if one looks hard enough, that success was the logical conclusion to their circumstance.

In 2017, Gates had a personal wealth just shy of 90 billion dollars. It's hard to put into perspective on a human scale. So for reference, \$90 billion is roughly the GDP of Ethiopia, a country with a population of over a 100 million people, or if you prefer it was more than 0.1 % of the GDP of our entire planet at the time. So did Bill Gates attain this absurd fortune thanks to his remarkable talents or through some other means? Well, let's start with the talent part. Bill Gates is an extremely smart guy. Actually, smart doesn't really cover it. His IQ is estimated to be around 160. That's about the same as Einstein's, comfortably in genius territory. Gates is almost famous for being an almost inhumanly hard worker. By some accounts, he will

clock up to 120 hours in the office per week in the early days of Microsoft. On the surface, it sounds like an open and shut case. Bill Gates was, and probably still is a hardworking genius. So the fact he became unimaginably successful is no fluke. And that's absolutely true. The problem is, it isn't the whole truth. You see, there was another factor at play that helped Bill Gates achieve his phenomenal success. He was absurdly lucky.

Let's get the obvious bits of luck out of the way first. He was born in one of the most prosperous countries on Earth, the USA. His parents were wealthy and successful and they had enough spare cash lying around to send him to an elite private school by the name of Lakeside. Still ranked as one of the best private high schools in the US to this day. That's about as good a start in life as any human could hope to have and that's just the beginning.

The year after Gates enrolled at Lakeside, the school started a club offering students remote access to a powerful mainframe computer that might not sound like a big deal, but this was 1968, when computer access essentially didn't exist in high schools, and home PCs hadn't even been invented yet. Lakeside was quite literally one of the only schools in the world giving its students access to a powerful computer at the time, which meant Bill Gates had the opportunity to learn to code younger than almost anyone in history before him. One of the other lucky ones given that opportunity was Paul Allen, one of Gates' classmates at Lakeside and the man who he would go on to found Microsoft with. Bill Gates is a brilliant guy. There's no disputing that, but he isn't unique. Around 0.03 % of the population can match Gates' IQ. That's over 2 million people worldwide who are, on paper, just as intelligent as he is. And considering that sample size, some will inevitably be just as driven and hardworking as he was too. The reason you've never heard of them, whilst Bill Gates is one of the richest men in history, it's nothing to do with skill, talent or hard work, just plain old luck. Or at least chance.

Luck is a bit like money, it doesn't seem all that important until it runs out. But the idea that luck plays a big role in our lives is surprisingly universal. Most successful people, even the lucky ones, work pretty hard. And it's never nice to hear that your achievements are as much to luck as your grit and determination. I'm not trying to say that talent and hard work count for nothing. They count for a hell of a lot. Hard work, especially. Hidden Dice rolls from time to time have a huge impact on how all of our lives turn out. Bill Gates is an example of what can happen in a perfect storm of both talent and luck. He was the right person in the right place at the right time in

history. And that was enough to make him the richest man alive. Had his parents chosen any other school in the US. He would have been deprived of both his edge and his business partner, and Microsoft would never have happened. That isn't just an opinion, by the way. Gates has said that so himself on more than one occasion.

Of course, no Microsoft doesn't mean his life would have ended in failure, but it might well have made tens of billions of dollars difference in terms of his net worth. All from a seemingly inconsequential decision like which school he went to.

Let's take hockey players as another example. A professional hockey player might talk about hard work, determination, great coaches, their parents' willingness to get up at 5 AM, and so on, but they probably won't mention how lucky they were to be born in January. 40% of hockey players picked into top-tier leagues are born in the first quarter, compared to 10% in the fourth quarter; an early birthday can increase your chances of becoming a pro hockey player by up to four times. The reason for this disparity is presumably because the cutoff date for kids' hockey leagues is January 1st. On average, kids born in the first part of the year are bigger and faster than those born in the second half of the year.

As they grow up, this difference should eventually disappear, but it doesn't. As a result, the young kids who show the most promise receive more time on the ice and enter more tournaments, improving their skills and receiving better coaching. These advantages compound year after year, so by the time you get to the pros, birthdays are heavily skewed toward the start of the year. But does any professional hockey player feel thankful for their birthday?

We are all the same way, largely oblivious to the fortunate events that support our success. Probably the most significant bit of luck many of us enjoy is being born into a prosperous country; around half the variance in income received by people around the world is explained by their country of residence and that country's income distribution. If you were born in Burundi, for example, which has the world's lowest gross national income per capita of just 730 dollars a year, it doesn't matter how smart or hard-working you are; you're unlikely to earn much as an adult.

Many people get offended if you point out how big a role chance plays in their success. There is an existential crisis that one might have, as If we are just a product of our circumstances, then our hard work and our talent seem to count for nothing.

People think it has to be either skill or luck that explains success, but the truth is you need both. Take these eight track and field world records: all the athletes who achieve these records are obviously world-class, extremely dedicated, and talented, and yet, when they achieved their world records, seven out of eight had a tailwind. Now these athletes all had the ability to win a gold medal, but to set the world record required a bit of luck as well, yet now the question is, where exactly does that ability truly come from?

Even for those who fit the rags to riches narrative, or at least are perceived to be this way, these people are often the genetic anomaly and have excessively high traits which lead them to become successful. The American psychologist Robert Plomin has stated previously that what determines one's outcome when it comes to, educational achievement, for example, is 40 percent nurture, and 60 percent nature, the thing is, you have no volition over either of these, they are largely stochastic and idiosyncratic, with such factors as height and weight being 90 and 70 percent heritable respectively.

Though people might attribute their achievements to their indomitable will, or their amazing mindset, the question still arises of where that mindset came from. Is this indomitable will simply a nebulous construction with no original point, that others can have if they only tried hard enough, and if that is the case, why is it that one tries harder than another? This line of questioning could go on ad Infinitum, however, it always ends with characteristics which we do not have volition over.

Chapter 6 - Part 2 - Asceticism

In conclusion the existence of hierarchies can be seen as non-corporeal, necessary, and negative in nature. Wherever there is light there is also darkness, and whenever there are winners there will always be losers as well, it is cause and effect, and one cannot be separated from another. For this reason, mankind is forever locked in a journey to find a mythical object, that which has a top, yet no bottom, futilities tautology.

Asceticism can be thought of as a state of constant loss, and the acceptance of said loss, though the effects of such a lifestyle are hard to predict, hierarchical descention, if accepted may very well be able to be habituated. If one becomes accustomed to decent, to a greater extent than even those who follow Bai Lan, it may very well be possible that similar to chronic pain, one might be able to simply

grin and bear it. It might even be made easier with the lack of knowledge of how low down one is, if one chooses to live a life somewhat detached from the outside world, one could not know victory nor defeat, yet all of this is mere speculation. However, what a sorry state for one to be in, lower than that of the ant or the worm, would it not be best to rather aim upwards towards heavens branches?

Chapter 6 - Part 3 - Vanya

Vanya will allow one to always have the ability to ascend, regardless of external, or internal hindrances. Constant movement upwards, for all, with no limit, whenever one was to reach the highest echelon there would be one above that which is higher, and that one is able to attain. Such realities are possible.

Throughout the entirety of this book, I have spoken about the negative nature of reality, all are hierarchies, and how hierarchies have within them a litany of negative consequences for the plight of man, and how the plight of man, is an a priori feature of the subject. However, the problems which have been presented here are fixable, and they will be fixed in the coming future.

The main schism which I have tackled here is between man and man, how existence together leads to conflict, leads one to be in the domination of the other, and more importantly, to want to be in the domination of another. Many have attempted to amend this problem by changing the nature of man, attempting effectively to rewire him to be more of a passive being, the idea of Nietzsche's slave and master morality comes to mind here.

Chapter 6- Part 4 - Master Morality

- Much of the following is taken from Lee Archie and John G Archie's, Reading for -
- Philosophical Inquiry, -

There is a master morality and a slave morality - but I would like to add right away that in all superior and mixed cultures there are also attempts to reconcile the two moralities. Yet, we still, more often find confusion and incomprehension. It is true that at times even they are closely bound juxtaposition, a friendly foe - even in the same man, within a single soul. The distinction of moral values originates either within a ruling caste, comfortably aware of being different from the governed - or within the governed class, the slaves and dependents of all kinds.

In the first case, when the rulers define the term "good", it is the exalted and proud disposition, which serves as a distinctive feature and determines the order of precedence. The noble human type separates from itself the beings in whom the opposite of this sublime and proud attitude is shown, it disgusts their existence. It should be noted at once that in this first type of morality, the antithesis "good" and "bad" means practically the same thing as "noble" and "despicable", - the antithesis "good" and "bad" is of a completely different meaning, however. The cowards, the timid, the insignificant, and those who think only of petty utility are despised; furthermore, also, the distrustful with their reserved looks, the self-degraders, the dogs that allow themselves to be mistreated, the beggars, and above all the liars: - it is the fundamental conviction of all aristocrats that the people are false. "We truthful" - that's what the nobles of Ancient Greece called themselves.

It is evident that everywhere initially the designations of moral worth were applied to man, and were derived and applied only to acts of man at a later period; it is therefore a grave error when moral historians begin with questions such as, "Why are sympathetic deeds praised?" The noble type of man considers himself an admired not the admirer; he does not need approval; he judges: what is harmful to me is harmful in itself; he knows that only he himself gives credit to things; he is a creator of values. He honors all that he recognizes in himself: such morality is self-aggrandizement. In the foreground is the feeling of plenitude, of power that wants to overflow, the happiness of a high tension, the consciousness of a wealth that would like to give and give plentifully: - the noble also helps the unfortunate, but not - or barely - out of pity, but out of a surge of an abundance of power.

The noble honors the powerful in himself, the one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who likes to submit to severity and harshness, and has respect for all that is severe and harsh. "Wotan put a hard heart in my chest," says an old Norse legend: He rightly speaks from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man even prides himself on not being made for sympathy. The hero of the saga, therefore, warns: "He who does not have a hard heart when he is young will never have one." The noble and the brave who think so are furthest from morality, which lies precisely in compassion or in acting for the benefit of others, or sees the mark of morality in selflessness; self-belief, self-pride, a radical hostility and irony to "altruism" are as much a part of noble morality as a reckless disregard and caution of sympathy and "warm heart."

It is the powerful who know how to honour, it is their art, their inventiveness. The deep reverence for antiquity and tradition – all right rests on this double reverence – the belief and the prejudice in favor of the ancestors and unfavorable to the newcomers characterizes the morality of the powerful. And if conversely, people who have "modern ideas" almost instinctively believe in "progress" and "the future" and increasingly lack respect for old age, then the ignoble origin of these "ideas" has complacently betrayed itself thereby.

A morality of the ruling class, however, is more especially foreign and irritating to present-day taste in the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one's equals; that one may act towards beings of a lower rank, towards all that is foreign, just as seems good to one, or "as the heart desires," and in any case "beyond good and evil": it is here that sympathy and similar sentiments can have a place. The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge—both only within the circle of equals,—artfulness in retaliation, refinement of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—in fact, in order to be a good friend): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as has been pointed out, is not the morality of "modern ideas," and is therefore at present difficult to realize, and also to unearth and disclose.

Chapter 6- Part 5- Slave Morality

The situation is different with the second type of morality, slave morality. Assuming that the abused, oppressed, suffering, unemancipated, weary, and insecure people should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral assessments? A pessimistic suspicion about the overall situation of the man will probably be expressed, perhaps a condemnation of the man and his situation. The slave has an eye unfavorable to the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and a distrust, a refinement of distrust with regard to all the "good" which is honored there – he would like to persuade himself that their happiness is not true, nor authentic. On the other hand, the qualities which serve to make life easier for those who suffer are highlighted and flooded with light; here comes compassion, helping hand, warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and kindness; for these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means of bearing the burden of existence. Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility.

Therein lies the origin of the famous antithesis of 'good' and 'evil': power and danger are believed to reside in evil, a certain fear, subtlety, and strength, which cannot be despised. Thus, according to slave morality, the "bad" person evokes fear; according to master morality, it is precisely the "good" man who arouses and seeks to arouse fear, while the bad man is considered the despicable.

The contrast reaches its climax when, according to the logical consequences of slave morality, a semblance of depreciation – it may be small and well-meaning – finally attaches itself to the "good" man of this morality; because, according to the servile mentality, the good man must, in any case, be the safe man. He is good-natured, easy to deceive, and perhaps a little stupid. Wherever slave morality prevails, language tends to approximate the meanings of the words "good" and "stupid."

Here, it could be said, that the less servile and more dominating morality of the master is that which is true and natural, as it mostly pertains to man's wish to have the power of full and unadulterated self-actualization. Yet, to spite those who have power, a new form of morality is aroused, which goes against impulse, and dominates the self, and subjugates the self instead of external stimuli, as it should, and must do.

Slave and master morality, are both necessary to the world as it stands so that one can have either a perceived or truly actualised sense of power. The problem here, presupposing the problem to have a solution, is not the self, and the self's inability to dominate, and command authority, but others, and their inability to be commanded, and dominated.

It might be said that it is easier to change man to become more dominating and aggressive, fear-inducing, and so on, but this is not at all the case, for two main reasons.

1. The first being that the trait which is in question being agreeableness or the lack thereof is a highly immutable characteristic, with it being recommended by clinical psychologists such as Jordan B Peterson, that one should adapt their external environment to fit them, rather than change oneself, in this particular degree.

2. The second of these two reasons is extremely simple, and that has been pervasive throughout this book, that fact being that everyone cannot dominate. where there are dominators, so too must there be the dominated, one cannot exist without the other.

For this reason, my point is made clear, man is incompatible with its likeness. To fix such a schism is for man to exist within a world, in which all can dominate always. This world will work on a simple predicate, the hotter the battle the sweeter the victory, with the heat and the pain being adjusted for each person so that the perception is identical, even if the Fahrenheit might be different. To use a somewhat questionable coinage, to each according to his ability, to each according to his desire.

One will not simply be gifted victory, however, victory will always be attainable to one, if they are willing to work for it, a world in which the means are always conducive to the desired ends, and the means are an endemic quality of man.

Reality is a harness.
Harness the harness.
For our ambition.